

the
JAPANESE FANTASY
FILM JOURNAL¹⁴₃



Super Monster

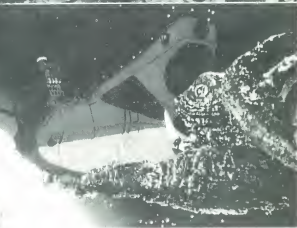
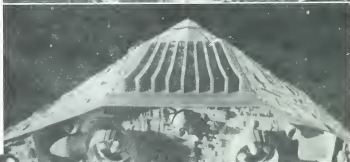
An all-new Gamera adventure, **UCHU KAIJU GAMERA**, a 1993 New Dairei production distributed by Shochiku Co., Ltd., brings back his nemesis of yore.

An alien force, with conquest on its mind, targets Earth as the first objective of the battle plan. From the invaders' enormous death ship, the Zanon (pictured top, middle), giant bosses are dispatched to destroy the cities of man, to force his surrender. Three women with super powers are sent from a planet of peace to assist Gamera in the interplanetary war, with not only space, but Earth, the field of a spectacular battle.

The producers, aware of the influence of older film material in **JAWS**, **STAR WARS** and post-SW fantasy movies, intended to parody those takeoffs. Dairei failed, parodying the worst of the "Gamera" movies.

Machi Fumieko, one of the heroines (below center), is a pro-wrestler and a popular personality in Japan. She sings the picture's theme song, "Love for Future."

No new footage of the atomic lurk was shot; he and his bestial foe appear only in stock footage. New effects work was filmed of the ship and the flying superwomen. Scenes taken from the animated Japanese features **SPACE CRUISER YAMATO** and **GALAXY EXPRESS 999** have been composited with the older Gamera footage, enabling him to cruise with the Yamato through space (bottom) ■



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THE JAPANESE FANTASY FILM JOURNAL

Art: Tim Johnson



Takashi Shimura is dead at the age of 76. Initially a stage performer, the veteran Toho actor, who often chose to appear in the films of Akira Kurosawa, died Thursday, February 11, 1982 in a Tokyo hospital from pulmonary emphysema. Teamed on many occasions with Toshiro Mifune, Shimura appeared in a number of very successful Japanese films which achieved recognition outside their country of origin: RASHOMON (a Venice Grand Prix winner), DRUNKEN ANGEL, STRAY DOG, LOWER DEPTHS, SEVEN SAMURAI, YUJIMBO, and THRONE OF BLOOD. The actor, as well, took small but memorable roles in a great number of sci-fi and fantasy films, appearing most often as a leading scientist: GODZILLA, RODAN, THE MYSTERIANS, THE LAST WAR, THE THREE TREASURES, GORATH, and many others. Shimura also performed in Dai's fantasy-horror film THE BRIDE FROM HADES, and their myth-like KILLER WHALE. For his contributions to the Japanese performing arts and the cinema, he was awarded the Medal of Honor with Purple Ribbon in 1976, and the Fourth Class Order of the Rising Sun in 1980.

Seyouner, Mr. Shimura. ■



Takashi Shimura (1905-1982)



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TIME SLIP

TIME SLIP is an entertaining combo science fiction/samurai adventure film, with appeal for fans of both genres. The original Japanese version under review is overlong and diffuse, with tightening recommended for domestic use.

Farfetched story has a squad of modern Japanese soldiers on maneuvers at a remote beach, where at dawn their watches stop and they are transported back to the 16th century Okay composite shots and special visual effects are used for the transition.

A light tone is established by one of the soldiers' reaction to the appearance of masked samurai warriors in vintage gear: "Is it a festival?" However, the numerous battle scenes are enacted with extremely graphic bloodletting, contrasting with comic-strip nature of the script.

The squad's leader, Lieutenant Iba (Sonny Chiba), decides somewhat illogically that the only way to return to the modern age is to try and

Toei's Close Encounters of Different Times

radically change history, thereby causing nature to send them back to their time in order to maintain the status quo. To this end, he teams up with a samurai rebel (Isao Natsuk) to try and defeat the establishment and take over the country.

An estranged, time-killing sub-plot has Chiba killing off a group of his own men who have turned renegades and start raping and pillaging the locals on their own. Also pointless is some unresolved crosscutting of a modern girl friend (Nana Okada) left waiting at a train station. A low comedy rape of a local "widow lady" could also be removed to the film's advantage.

The many beautifully staged battles (choreographed by Chiba) are highlighted by the contrast of the old and the new. One delightful swashbuckling scene has samurai Isao Natsuk escaping via a rope ladder to a hovering helicopter outside the window after an authentic sword battle with his foes inside a castle. Ultimately, Chiba overcomes his men's desire to return to the initial beach and wait for a second time slip. He has become enamored of the freedom to do as one likes in the medieval period, and has decided to fight to the end. In scenes reminiscent of Sam Peckinpah's *THE WILD BUNCH*, he and his men decimate hundreds of infantrymen and samurai with their machine guns, hand grenades and tank. Finally, superior numbers prevail and all the modern soldiers are killed. This plot twist skillfully avoids the corny "second time slip" used in other films of this type, e.g., *THE FINAL COUNTDOWN*.

Chiba and his troupe of players are very effective and film's technical credits are top-notch. Worth jetsetting is an awful musical score which

includes numerous rock ballads (sung over mainly in English though dialogue is spoken in Japanese) which clash harmfully with the action. (Reprinted from *Variety*, Feb. 4, 1981) ■

TIME SLIP (SENGOKU JIETAI) A Toei Co., Ltd. Production. Director: Kosei Saito. Produced by Haruki Kadokawa. Based upon a book by Ryo Hamura. Screenplay by Tochio Kameta. Director of photography: Iwao Isayama. Music by Kantaro Haneda. Sound recording by Fumio Hashimoto. Battle scenes choreographed by Sonny Chiba. Director of special effects: Hiroyoshi Suzuki. A 1980 release. Running time: 139 minutes. Cast: Sonny Chiba, Taunehiko Wataze, Rella Ryu, Jun Eto, Isao Natsuk, Miyuki Ono, Masao Kusaka, Hiroko Yakushimaru, Nana Okada.

Photos © 1980 Toei Co., Ltd.
Courtesy of Atlas International Film GmbH





TRIVIA

Trivia begets more trivia, some old and some new, and, with the continuing column being proof of the subject, for once again JPLF regularly you with information whose bearing on the Japanese fantasy cinema remains. But think of the interesting corner where you can unlearn upon your travels. We begin with a contribution from Fred Patten, as published in the June 2, 1981 Los Angeles Times: "It wasn't the kind of melt-down you see on the late, late, late 'and movie Godzilla vs. Beasts Roosted & Go Beasts had introduced a plastic garbage bag named Biogritz, which was obtained with a creature that resembled the Japanese movie lizard Toho Co., Ltd. Godzilla's maw, and was called a Biogritz. However, the cartoon pointed out that Godzilla's maw and the bags were unrelated products and said the Beasts name was just a humorous caricature." So Biogritz, the garbage eater, lives!

One of our more prolific contributors, Doug Patten, offers two ads for the public. The first appeared in the Toronto Star, an article on Neil Gaiman, producer of Neil Gaiman's song, "Bleed Devil Eyes." Mr. Gaiman is quoted as saying: "When I first heard the original version of 'Bleed Devil Eyes' I loved the lyrics. But this music had the strange Leon Russell meets Godzilla feel to it. So, we set down and completely restructured it. By the time we had worked the arrangement up, I thought we had a monster!"

Doug also reports on a search by the very creative and mad Second City troupe on their TV series, "SCTV Network 90." A take off on the interview program, on Carson, had main subject Godzilla appearing as a guest on "The Tim Lahrman Show" to plug his new book. The host, instead, questioned the money with some relief on all his stu-

deeds something Grogan wanted to have behind. Continued pleading by the host and audience for the time is left to discover something useful in Grogan's disarming a model time we no budget effects.

On the subject of monster, freelance author and designer Michael Bing appeared as one in Toho's 1978 space opera MESSAGE FROM SPACE, a Japanese version of STAR WARS. In an article in Today (Sept. 10, 1981) by Matt Salmon, submitted by reader John Lofkin, Mr. Bing describes the scene in which he was included, a copy of STAR WARS' famous cantina sequence with its intergalactic hybrids. "The film makers put me in green pants and a red jacket and set me down at a bar. I was without a mask or makeup. According to the Japanese, I qualify for a space monster!"

From the New York Times, July 24, 1981 in a review of comic Denis Blair's presence at "Danglehead": "It would be like to call him an impressionist, because he's more than that. He's a parodist and a satirist and a singer and, well, there is no word to describe someone who can turn the 'I Love Lucy' theme song and make where the soundtrack skips. If there were such a word, I would also describe someone who can show how the Japanese movie monster Roderus walks."

Next we turn to a contribution from Bob Johnson. According to Bob, the "Lawrence and Shirley" television series again plays up to our monster funny bone in a scene from one of its episodes. Lawrence, showing his French vacation slides, finds pictures of some Japanese females at Disneyland mixed with her own. When she stops to take them from the projector, Shirley remarks "Show the rest. I wanna see if they get eaten by Roderus!" Roderus obviously has



more supporters than we imagined. In fact there is even a rock band with the name.

As we move into the field of music, Bob Johnson informs us of a statement made by a radio announcer on station KMSL, FM, when he announced during a recent San Francisco earthquake that he felt like he was in a Godzilla movie. We agree. The small grade quake which shook Toledo some time back was pretty scary.

A friend of Bob's attended a Blue Oyster Cult concert on New Year's Eve. Instead of an opening act, GODZILLA'S REVENGE was run on a big screen. (We wonder what sort of crowd violence that incited.) When the band emerged, they performed the cult classic "Godzilla" with a 40 foot Godzilla backdrop painted behind the rock 'n' rollers. Now, if they only would we run the original Japanese print of GODZARA.

Bob Johnson also notices us of an import cassette tape which caught his attention "Red Dragon Punk Funk" by a band named Godzilla. The "Terror-like psycho funk" group, adds John Lofkin, can be heard on a 90 minute cassette from Scott Bryson (Box 96, Malibu, California 90263), who also tells of the indie mini-industrial new wave Storm Prender (Box 26250, Washington, D.C. 20009) who released an independent 9" single on Arbutus Records with a cut titled "Monster Zero." The music is kind of new, but interesting—includes innovative use of guitar synthesizer. And the lyrics?

Monster One and Monster Two
Goetz and Roderus
as Planet X will bring an end
to Monster Zero's plan

Paul Dikie (sic) and his lightning bolts
threefold did burn and blast
The X-men hide out underground
They need Japan and fuel!

Calling Nick Adams!
Calling Fuel!
Calling Godzilla!

Calling Roderus!

The Nippon peppergrass flash
The army holds their fire

The leader of the X-men speaks
of peace
On what a lie!

Flash! Planet X invades Earth!
Earth to become Planet X colony!

Adding all the above to your list begun last issue which mentioned the punk rockers Century All Monsters, a would appear Japanese fantasy film fans are mutually in divided. Or vice versa.

Hang in there, true aficionados!

Left: Columbia Records' ad for Blue Oyster Cult's "Godzilla." Below: Cover (top) for French magazine whose contents across both Toho films illustrated. Cartoon (bottom) issued over announced US nuclear bomb production, from Le Canard Enchaîné.

The Cult's new single is a monster.

On the 1980s scene, Godzilla has become the most popular monster in the world. Now, the band Blue Oyster Cult has released their new single, "Godzilla," which is a tribute to the monster. The single is available on 7" and 12" formats. The band's new album, "The Big Game," is also available. The band's new single, "Godzilla," is a tribute to the monster. The single is available on 7" and 12" formats. The band's new album, "The Big Game," is also available. The band's new single, "Godzilla," is a tribute to the monster. The single is available on 7" and 12" formats. The band's new album, "The Big Game," is also available.

Godzilla
in Columbia Records



FAR EAST REPORT

CLOSEUP

Tezuka

MIGHTY ASAMU (TETSUWAN ATOMU) Osamu Tezuka's popular animated boy robot returned in this new animated television broadcast Oct. 1, 1980-Dec. 23, 1981 in 52 episodes, featuring stories adapted from Tezuka's "Mighty Atom" comics.

UNICO A 1981 animated made-for-TV feature about a cute, little unicorn.

UNICO 2 Animated theatrical feature in production detailing the further adventures of the little unicorn. Ironically, Sanno is handling animation chores.

BUREMIN An animated made-for-TV feature broadcast in 1981, based on the Grimm tale "Bremen Town Musicians."

DON DRACULA Animated TV series, based on Osamu Tezuka's comic "Dracula" character, which began in 1981.

Kitty Enterprises

NOISY PEOPLE FROM SPACE (YURUSEI YASURA) Starting Oct. 14, 1981, this animated TV show based on the long-running Japanese comic strip by Rumiko Takahashi is about a rather sexy teenage girl from space who has come to Earth to set up an intriguing game. If a certain young man of Earth descent chases and catches her, the Earth will not be invaded by the aliens, if the youth is unable to catch her, it's curtains for the Earthlings. But a problem: The boy she chooses for the game is already in love with someone else. Also known as **LAMU THE INVADER GIRL** and **THOSE ANNOYING ALIENS**.

International Movie Co.

GO SHOGUN A 1982 animated TV program about giant combination-robots, though emphasis is placed on the humans populating the stories. Shigenori Kageyama is credited as chief animator. A feature film from the series was released April 24, 1982, distributed by Toei.

BALDIOS (BARUDIOSU) An animated feature based on the characters appearing in the company's television **SPACE WAR-**

RIOR—BALDIOS. The film was released Dec. 19, 1981 by Toei and Central. Like Nippon Sunrise's **IDEON**, the program's last 3 episodes were never broadcast in Japan and constitute the feature's makeup.

GALAXY CYCLONE BRYGAR (GINGA SENPOH BURAIGAR) Premiering Oct. 6, 1981, this animated TV show is a sort of "Lupin III in Space," since all the characters are based on the "Lupin" series. In the year 2102, the J9 Cosmo Rangers, Kido, Isaac (leader), Machiko (Angel), Valencia, and Steven Bowie are in the business to protect the solar system between Mars and Jupiter in their patrol craft, the Bry-Thunder, which is able to change into the battle robot, Brygar, piloted by Kido.

COLOCOLOPOLON Originally titled **POLON OF OLYMPUS**, the animated television is scheduled for broadcast late in 1982. Design is by Hideo Gonaka, artist of erotic comics who draws in the "girl's cartoon" style.

MECHA-VENGERS and **LEGEND OF THE DEMONS—ACRO-BUNCH** Both animated TV shows are in production. The first will star fantastic vehicles in fantastic adventures, while the latter will be a new giant robot saga.

GALAXY TASK FORCE—DANGAION More giant robots will be coming in the summer of '82 in a new animated program which has its action set in 2300. The drama will focus on the space ship Daidalos, capable of changing into the robot Dangaion, and its human crew. The omnipresent large eyes of the Japanese characters are mysteriously absent, replaced by those of accidentals.

Tatsunoko

YATODETAMAN Number five in the "Time Bokan" series, this animated TV program premiered Feb. 7, 1981. A quest by two factions is undertaken to find the mythical Phoenix. Yatodetaman and the queen he is escorting,

and a rival group of villains. The show contains a camel-shaped time machine, giant robots, and a robot horse, among other fantastic machinery.

THE LEGEND OF EARTH Currently in production, it is to be a serious animated feature. Pre-production artwork intimates an impressive film may be in the offing. A video disc will be issued from Victor Japan, Inc. in conjunction with the theatrical release of the film. Fuji will distribute **DESTINY SQUAD (SADAME-BIUS)** television animation. See Tatsunoko article elsewhere.

GOLDWARRIOR—GOLD-LIGHTAN Beginning its air time on Japanese TV in March, 1981, this animated show details the fantastic exploits of a gold lighter which changes into a huge, rambling robot.

ZENDAMAN From this laugh-filled animated TV series (Feb. 13, 1979-Jan. 26, 1980), Toei distributed a theatrical film in 1980, though the length of the release is unknown as is its makeup of new or old footage. The film was produced by Kenji Yoshida, scripted by Takao Koyama, and directed by Hiroshi Sakagawa.

Shochiku

TAO-TAO, THE TALE OF A PANDA This animated feature concerns a panda taken to Europe where he receives an enthusiastic welcome, but he soon grows homesick and tries to return to his old environment. Yoji Yamada created and supervised. Released Dec. 26, 1981, the picture runs 80 mins. Based on a novel by Ken Takahashi, screenplay and design by Shuchi Nakahara.

Mushi Productions

YUKI—SNOW FAIRY An Aug. 9, 1981 animated feature from the producers of **ADVENTURES OF THE POLAR CUBS**. Character design is by Tetsuya Saba. Nikkatsu distributed.

Nippon Sunrise

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM The 43 episode animated TV show, broadcast in 1979/1980, is responsible for the footage used

Compiled by August Ragone



Toei Doga's feature, **ALADDIN AND HIS MAGIC LAMP** (1982)

in three feature films released in 1981/1982. The series was inspired by Robert A. Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*. Shochiku distributes the films. Yasuhiko Yoshizaki is credited with character design, Okazora Kunio, mechanical design. See inside back cover for more information.

NEW HERO, ULTIMATE ROBOT DAIYOGER An animated TV show, it stars super-

robot Daiyoger, another enormous robot formed by the unification of smaller machines. Introduced Jan. 3, 1981, the series follows the adventures of Prince Mito and his three friends, adapted from famous feudal-period historical events. The series is rife with in-jokes and comedy.

TRYDER G-7 A humorous, animated television show about a young boy who, upon his father's death, assumes the presidency of the parent's company and undertakes dangerous tasks using the mighty robot Tryder G-7. Broadcast from Feb. 2, 1980-Jan. 24, 1981, 50 episodes.

IDEON, SPACE RUNAWAY (DENTSU KYOJIN IDEON) Broadcast May 8, 1980-Jan. 30, 1981, this 38 episode animated series for television had as its storyline the search for a mysterious power source, "Ide," which a robot uses to function. There is an underlying question posed in the show: Will the ultimate power source that is unlimited and inexhaustible corrupt mankind into a people that will think of themselves as god-like beings? A feature film, *THE IDEON*, is being prepared which will contain the last three episodes (along with new footage). What is so intriguing is that the episodes were never shown in Japan! The Japanese title translates as "Legend of the Great God, Ideon."

FANGS OF THE SUN—DOUGRAM Created by Yasuhiko Yoshikazu, this 1982 television show is set on Earth's colony in space, Derora, in the year 2203, where groups of people, hating the decadent way of life, have banded together to fight off attacks of the rich, whose way of life threatens them. The son of the prominent family, Carrin Cassam, secretly is leader of the Derora 7 resistance and operates the Douggram combat armor. The show premiered Oct. 23, 1981.

BATTLE MECHA-ZANBUN-GURL Designed to compete with the complexity and originality of the *GUNDAM* series, this animated show is scheduled to begin late summer of 1982.

Left: Shataro Ishimori's "Cyborg 009" from Toei's 1981 feature, *LEGEND OF SUPER GALAXY*. Above: Giant robots from two 1980-1981 Nippon Sunrise TV programs (export sales from Hiro Media Associates). **TRYDER G-7**, top, and **IDEON, SPACE RUNAWAY**, bottom.



Academy

BLUE NOAH Highlighted by some very good animation, this television series was little more than a copy of Academy's "Yamato" saga. An Earth of the future is threatened by aquatic aliens, but the construction of the Blue Noah, a super space-craft carrier, foredooms the threat. Designs of the enemy space ships were created by Yuji Kaido.

SPACE CRUISER YAMATO—TO ETERNITY This is the working title for the last feature film of the series, to be released in the summer of '82.

Daiel

"Majin," the famous character that starred in three Daiel films in 1965, is rumored to return in a new film. Designer of the original costume (main-in-suit), Ryosaku Takayama, is to return to create the newest incarnation. Takayama has been responsible for the bees and featured characters in *ULTRA Q*, *ULTRAMAN*, *ULTRA 7*, *MONSTER PRINCE*, *SPECTREMAN*, *SILVER MASK*, *IRON KING*, *FIRE MAN*, and more.

Toei/Toei Doga

MASKED RIDER Produced by Sukefumi Watanabe, this live action, 45 minute long featurette, scripted by Susumu Takahata, was either culled from footage appearing in *KAMEN RIDER*

SUPER-1 or is an all-new film *KAMEN RIDER VS. GALAXY KING*. Released in 1980, it starred Hiroaki Murakami.

ELECTRONIC FIGHTING TEAM

DENZIMAN (DENSHI SENTAI DENJIMAN) Based upon the live-action TV series broadcast from 1980 through 1981, and retaining that show's "camp" and tongue-in-cheek approach, this all-new 45 minute long featurette was released in 1980, produced by Akinori Watanabe, scripted by Saburo Uehara, and directed by Koichi Takemoto. The short starred Shiroshi Yuki and Eichi Tasuyama. ("Denji" or "Denz" is Japanese for "Electronic" or "Electric.")

'80 ANIMATION—THE BEST

TEN (80 ANIMESHION ZAA) Produced by Masashi Tokuyama and directed by Don Ueno, this 1980 feature is a compilation of animation footage from various shorts, TV material, and features: *GUNDAM*, *LUPIN III*, *YAMATO BE FOREVER*, *GALAXY EXPRESS 999*, *CAGLIOSTRO'S CASTLE*, etc.

"Galaxy Express 999" JFFJ has credits for a 1980, made-for-TV, animated feature based on the GE 999 pilot device. Produced by Kenji Yokoyama, scripted by Keesuke Fujikawa, directed by Masayuki Uchiyama. Unfortunately, there have been a number of "Express" TV specials, making it

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impossible at the moment to pin down the title for which these credits should be associated. Two "special episodes" for TV in 1990 were **ETERNAL WANDERER**, **EMERALDUS** and **INVISIBLE SEA OF ARITEMIS** (the latter from episodes 51 and 52 of the GE series). A two-part TV special, which aired May 1 and May 8, 1991, had Tetsuro and Master boarding the space train, eventually encountering the Chyrennes of the Water Country. **ONE HUNDRETH KING OF BEASTS—GOLION** An animated TV series about a giant humanoid robot formed by five robot lions, each color-coded and controlled by a human pilot. The show was shown from March 4, 1991 to Feb. 25, 1992 in 52 episodes. (The "go" in the title means "5.") **GORUGU V** (**DAI SENTAI GORUGU V**; trans., **GREATEST FIGHTING TEAM GORUGU V**) In the tradition of **ZENJIMAN** and **SUNVULCAN**, it's another live-action superhero television series which began its TV life Feb. 1991. A crazy mixture of assorted superhero/mutant TV shows with impressive effects, it features a band of 5 costumed heroes battling evil forces.

(NEW TAKETORI LEGEND) QUEEN OF A THOUSAND YEARS Beginning April 16, 1991, this of-an-TV show, consisting of 52 half-hour episodes, was created by Leiji Matsumoto, based on his early comic series. Yoshinori Kanamori was chief animator. A prelude to **GALAXY EXPRESS 999**, the series was not very successful, possibly a result of its similarities to **EXPRESS** in content and design. The program details the time and space exploits of a woman who is a clone of the Master character from **EXPRESS**. She is Yayoi, who becomes Master's mother, Queen Promexium. A feature film with new footage, titled **QUEEN MILLENNIA**, was released March 13, 1992.

MY YOUTH IN ARCADIA (WAGA AOIBA NO ALUCADIA) Space Pirate, Captain Harlock is set to appear in a new film, animated of course, which will present the origin of the hero, set for release July 24, 1992.

MYSTERY! FRANKENSTEIN—LEGEND OF TERROR An animated made-for-TV feature televised July 27, 1991, a potpourri of incidents from the Frankenstein films and loosely based on the Marvel "Frankenstein" comic.

TIGER MASK THE 2ND An

animated TV show which began its run April, 1991, it concerns the son of the wrestling star from the original **TIGER MASK** series; he battles stylized villains in and out of the ring. **CYBERG 009—LEGEND OF SUPER GALAXY** Opening in Jan., 1991 to favorable response from Japanese audiences, this animated feature, created by Shotaro Ishinomori, tells of a band of nine cyborg superheroes who travel through a star gate into another galaxy to rescue a beautiful princess. To reach the enormous Fortress Star, the entourage must battle an assortment of evil characters, including a one-eyed cyclops. Scripted by Takazo Nakanishi and produced by Ishinomori, the picture was released in the Vista-Vision format, running 130 minutes. Two directors have been credited with work on the feature, Masayuki Akehi and Yasuhiro Yamaguchi. One may be the animation director, the other charged with the film overall.

ADIEU GALAXY EXPRESS 999—FINAL STOP, ANDROMEDA (SARABA GINGA TETSUDO 999—ANDROMEDA SHUICHAKUEKI) This animated feature, released Aug., 1991, concludes the GE saga with Master boarding the interstellar train, leaving little Tatsuro, her traveling companion, behind. Leiji Matsumoto created and designed the film Taro Rin directed.

OTHERWORLDLY EVIL (MAKAI TENSHO) A questionable entry in the genre, a Kadokawa Production released by Toei. The live-action film bowed June, 1991 and starred popular singer Ken Sawada.

THE NUTCRACKER In pre-production, this is to be an animated feature co-produced with Marvel Entertainment Group. Adaptation of the E.T.A. Hoffmann tale will be in the capable hands of Marvel's Al Brodax (of **YELLOW SUBMARINE** fame). Mr. Brodax will be working with Alan Aldridge, graphic designer for the film. Recording producer George Martin will take charge of the picture's musical direction, incorporating the familiar Tchaikovsky themes with the music of seven pop/rock stars. Tentative running time is to be approx. 85 minutes.

FUTURE WAR 198X No release date has been announced on this animated feature based on John Haken's novel *World War III*. Tomoharu Katsumata and Toshio

(**CATASTROPHE** 1999) Masuda are directing the project. Masami Suda is directing the animation. **ANDROMEDA STORIES**

Animated television special for NTV's introduction of its "24 Hour TV." The feature has been adapted from the popular comic strip appearing in *Duo Magazine* and drawn by female artist Keko Takemaya (**TOWARD THE TERRA**). Scheduled premiere date is Aug. 22, 1992, from 10 p.m. to 12 a.m.

SUPER-MAGNETIC ROBOT VOLTUS V The animated TV series will be the basis of a second theatrical feature with footage culled from the show. To be released Dec., 1992.

ALADDIN AND HIS MAGIC LAMP (ARAJIN TO MAHO NO RANPU) Animated feature released in April, 1992 with music by pop rock group Golego, who also played on Toei's **HOUSE**.

SPACE POLICEMAN GIYARIBA (UCHU KEIJI GIYARIBA) Premiering Feb., 1992, this live-action teleseries concerns a few

TARO THE DRAGON BOY, Toei Doga's 1979 anime feature, below, tells of a youth's adventures during a trek in search of his mother who has been turned into a dragon. When Taro weeps over his mother's enchanted state, the tears are instrumental in restoring her to human form. Kiro Urayama, shown inset, directed. Rishio (**GODZILLA VS. THE SMOG MONSTER**, et. al.) Manabe scored.



enforcement robot who begins a career as a protector of peace and justice in space when aliens attack a future Earth.

DAIRAGAR XV Beginning March 3, 1982, the latest giant-combination-robot, "King Ragar," also the original title of the show, arrived on the television screen. Setting a record for the number of smaller machines uniting to create a bigger one, Ragar is made up of 15 different elements. The action takes place in the year 2000.

THUNDERBIRDS 2086 Gerry Anderson's **THUNDERBIRDS**, originally a marionette TV show, is being recreated and revised in a 52 half-hour episode animated series utilizing the latest in computer techniques, according to promotional copy. Co-produced with TSC and Jin Productions of Japan, the new program will be

a variation of the early seventies cartoon show **ZERO TESTER** (from Academy, Ltd.), based on Anderson's **THUNDERBIRDS** as well. ITC Entertainment, distributor of Anderson's shows, will pick up 2086 for U.S. and British release in the fall of 1983.

Tsuburaya

ULTRAMAN—HERO FROM THE STARS A live action feature upon which the studio was to have lavished big bucks. Due to the withdrawal of financial support from two backers, the picture is temporarily on hold. The only portion of the film to be lensed in Japan was to have been the visual effects. Author Don Glut was working on the screenplay, with Naburo Tsuburaya credited as executive producer. **SPACE CONVOY** A kind of "Truckers in the Far Future," the live-action television series is in pre-production as the issue goes to press.

Shinsei Org.

DORAEMON AND NOBITA'S SPACE FRONTIER DAYS (DORAEMON NOBITA NO UCHU KAIKAKUSHI) Doraemon, the magical, and little, robot cat and friend Nobita return in this fantasy adventure which takes them beneath their house using one of Doraemon's many gagways where they find a gateway into space. As superheroes, they encounter an outerspace gang in the animated adventure, a feature released March 13, 1981 and distributed in Japan by Toho. Also known as **DORAEMON AND SPACE ADVENTURES**, the picture clocks in at 91 minutes long.

21 EMO Animated fantasy theatrical film released Aug. 1981, and double-billed with



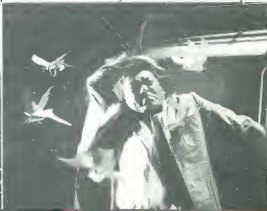
DORAEMON THE ATOMIC CAT, also from Shinsei. Distribution is by Toho. Content unknown at press time.

THE ATOMIC CAT'S BIG ADVENTURE (DORAEMON—NOBITA NO DAIMAHO) The magical cat's third animated theatrical feature, distributed by Toho, and running 90 mins. As **DORAEMON AND WONDERLAND**, the picture continues the shared adventures between Doraemon and friend Nobita on an expedition into the usual craziness. Released in April, 1982 with two other animated projects by Fujio/Fujiko, Ltd.: **MONSTER AND NINJA HATORIKUN**. A one-hour Doraemon TV special, shown April 2, 1982 from 7 to 8 p.m., contained three separate stories. **JYARINKO CHIE** An animated

TV special shown opposite the Doraemon special mentioned above on April 2, 1982 from 7 to 8 p.m., though featuring the wanderings of tough street cat Chie. He also starred in a feature released in the summer of 1981 and will be appearing in a TV series in the fall of '82.

Toho

TECHNO-POLICE 21C An animation feature in production for a summer '82 release, intended as the first of a "Techno-Police" series. Chief animator is Kazuo Tomizawa. Designs are by Studio Nue. Produced in association with Dragon Productions. **SAYONARA JUPITER** in pre-production, from the novel by Sakyo Komatsu (**SUBMERSON OF JAPAN**). Studio Nue will design. "Godzilla," as predicted by the



R EAST REPORT



rumor mill and relayed to JFFJ by Ed Godziszewski, will be starring in a new picture scheduled for release in the spring of 1983. Budgeted at \$5 million, the film will be scored by Akira Inokube, emboldened out of retirement for the project. Visual effects will be directed by either Teruyoshi Nakano or K. (ULTRAMAN '80) Kikagawa.

Tokyo Movie Shinsha
GIGANTOR (TETSUJIN 28) All now adventures of the long-ago television superhero and turned into a "jazzed-up" MAZINGER Z-like series, broadcast Oct. 3, 1980 through Aug., 1981.
GOODMARS A giant robot, animated television program whose main character has ESP and is unable to cope with the power. The show was slated to compete with Nippon Sunrise's FANGS OF THE SUN—DOUG-GRAM (both were shown on the same day and time, but on a different network).

LUPIN VIII Co-produced with TFI and DIC, two French animation outfits, the feature, set in the 22nd Century will present all the great, great, great grandchildren from the original "Lupin the III" TV and feature film series. Scheduled for release in Oct., 1982, the film has Tero Rin (GALAXY EXPRESS, CAPTAIN HARLOCK) as chief supervisor.
SHERLOCK HOLMES Hiroshi Miyazaki (LUPIN III) is working on a funny animal version of Conan Doyle's super sleuth starring an all-canine cast, to be produced with Italy's Coto Productions. Pro-

jected premiere date will be Oct., 1982. Set at the turn of the 20th century, the show will have its design geared to period authenticity.

COBRA In production, the animated space opera details the adventures of space pirate Cobra and his female android. The feature will be aimed at an adult audience with designs and approach harking to that of BARBARELLA, including lots of drinking, violence, scantily-clad women and sex. Designs are by Studio Nue. Based on a comic series in *Shonen Jump Magazine*, the picture should be in release in July, 1982 with a series to follow in Oct.

Nippon Herald
A ZOO WITH NO ELEPHANT (ZO NO NAI DOBUTSEN) An animated feature released April, 1982 with a screenplay by Ren Saito, Tsuneko Masuda directed.

Eiken Films
GALAXY PATROL PJ Eiken, producers of EIGHTH MAN, GIGANTOR, and other animated TV programs, is creating this animated television series, of 30 minute episodes, in cooperation with Ploshides, a French animation firm. Storyboards and designs are being handled in France with the remainder of the production being done in Japan. The show's style will be a departure from the norm, as it is more in the manner of France's "Astérix" comic and the output of Canada's Nelvana animation studio. Albert Bareille, billed as executive producer, created the

project; Lune Borg, the character design. Michel Lagrand will score the French version, but a different music track will be composed for the show's Japanese debut. Mechanical design is by Manchou.

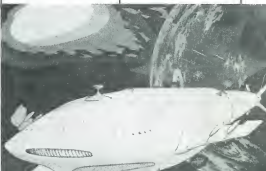
Nippon Animation
SAGETARIUS Co produced with Barona Productions of Italy, this animated television, whose Italian title is *TOPY ADVENTURE TEAM*, is similar to Eiken's GALAXY PATROL PJ, but but features an all-creature cast with the same style of non-Japanese animation. Created by Andrea Romani, the program will be issued both an Italian and English soundtrack.

SPACE LADY YOKO Co-produced with a French company, this animated "action" show is based on the French comic book series "Yoko Tsuno," drawn over the last ten years by Belgian Roger Lunbe. Yoko, a secret agent for Interpol, can be described best as a cross between "Blonde Woman" and "Wonder Woman," a sort of female James Bond in varied situations.

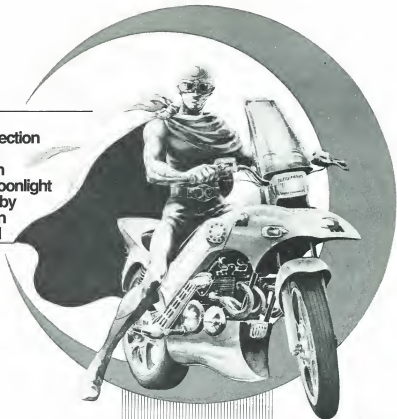
Miscellaneous
THE BLACK HAIR (KURCOKAMI) This 80 minute, 1980 live action film may be a remake of the famous tale by Lafcadio Hearn, as previously developed in Toho's KWAIDAN. Though its production house goes nameless, we do have some credits: Producer: Midon Kuntzaki, Director: M. Kuntzaki, Screenplay: Tamomitsu Fussaki, Cast: Senjaku Nakamura, Kiyoko Kureni
ANJU AND JUSHO-MARU A 1981 animated made-for-television feature. Studio and contents are unknown. ■



31st Century space explorer Ulysses, above, slayer of the Cyclops machine when rescuing his son and friends, has raised the ire of Zeus, supreme god of Olympus. Ulysses and crew are condemned to spend eternity in stasis unless he is successful in a quest to return to Old Earth, braving the terrible Kingdom of Hades enroute. The animated TV series, ULYSSES 31, is from Tokyo Movie Shinsha and France's D.I.C. Also from TMS is *MOBY DICK 5*, below, about a huge white whale, an incarnation of La Mu who was a powerful saint on the lost continent of Mu. The whale is transformed into a mighty space battleship to defend Earth from the returning planet Atlantis, originally defeated in a conflict with La Mu and driven to another dimension in space.



The
resurrection
of the
man in
the moonlight
mask by
Nippon
Herald



THE MOON MASK RIDER

Above: Poster art for Nippon Herald's new film. Bottom: Toei's 1958 incarnation of "The Man in the Moonlight Mask". Facing page: Exciting action scenes of "The Moon Mask Rider" as he attempts to frustrate the plans of the "Red Masks," bottom right.



Photo © 1958 Toei Co., Ltd.

You have your Easy Rider, your Masked Rider, your Ghost Rider—media-developed characters who listen to the different drummer mentioned in a familiar quotation. Another such media hero began his marching 23 years ago in Japan as an avenger of justice, his successful campaign as "The Man in the Moonlight Mask" spotlighted in comic strips and then in live-action films and an animated television series.

It was in May of 1958 that Gekko Kamen made his debut in the Japanese monthly *Shonen Kuwabaru* under the guidance of artist Jiro Kuwata and scripter Yasunori Kawauchi. Gekko Kamen ("The Moonlight Mask") became the secret identity of detective Juro Iwai wearing his familiar sunglasses, white cloak and suit, yellow gloves and boots, and white mask emblazoned with a crescent moon on its front. The Man in the Moonlight Mask spread terror in the hearts of his enemies with the help of his aide, Gorohachi. Mounted on his white motorcycle, and with both guns ablaze, used only for protection, mind you, Gekko Kamen seemed to materialize out of the air in his pursuit of practitioners of evil. The strip, filled with action and thrills, saw The Man in the Moonlight Mask evolve into Japan's most famous superhero. He made his last appearance on October, 1961 in the same publication in which he



began his momentous career.

During the first year of publication of the strip, Toei Co., Ltd. produced three live-action features based on the character: **MAN IN THE MOONLIGHT MASK**, **DEADLY CONFRONTATION ON A REMOTE BEACH**, and **THE CLAWS OF SATAN**. Three more films were released in 1969: **THE MONSTER GORILLA**, **THE CHALLENGING GHOST**, and **THE LAST DAY OF THE DEVIL**. Toei cast Fumitake Omura in the starring role of all six films. In that same year, when the strip was also published as a newspaper feature, the adventures of Gekko Kamen were broadcast on television as an animated series. The theme song from the TV show, "Gekko Kamen wa Dare-desho?" ("Who is the Moonlight Mask?") also enjoyed great popularity in the heyday of the strip.

The air the show created sold a multitude of mufflers, masks and glasses marketed to play on the attraction of the hero with children. The kids' attraction for the character had an adverse reaction as well as they attempted unsuccessfully to imitate the hero's daring physical stunts resulting in broken bones for many. Though the insistence of an organized group forced authorities to take the series off the air, the sentiments of viewers for the superhero and his crusade for justice and "good" have remained to this day.

Revived and revved-up for the challenge of the eighties, our hero has taken a new moniker, that of The Moon Mask Rider (pre-release publicity had him called The Moon Knight), for his latest

filmic endeavor from Nippon Herald, **THE MOON MASK RIDER**. He has also equipped himself with a super-charged motorcycle. Hardware in film has now gone from the terrors of outer space to the insanity of the asphalt. For this very special bike, designed by Takuya Yura and developed from a 750cc Honda, embellishments took 6 months at a cost of \$40,000. The latest Japanese technology enabled the power of the bike to jump from 66 to 150 horses. Additional changes to the bike place it in contention with James Bond's Aston Martin for gadgetry. The two-wheeler comes equipped with infra-red viewing, radar, a parachute to slow the speeding vehicle, a VTR system, and smoke, oil and flame guns, facets to be used for defensive purposes only stressed Nippon Herald's publicity department.

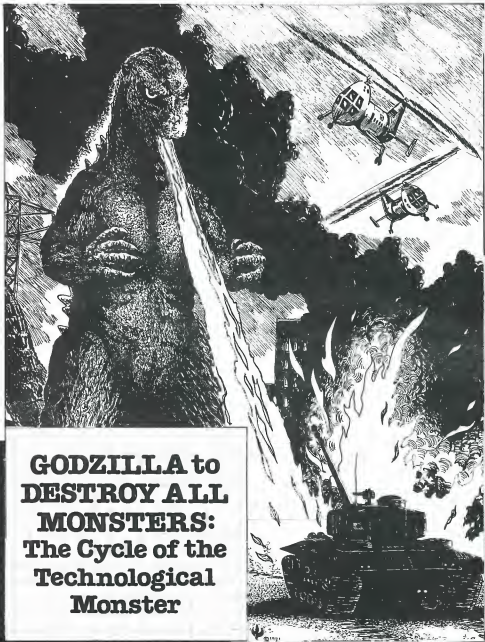
The film is not, however, a documentary about a 21st century motorcycle. The fantasy comes over to an Evil Knievel in white, a superhero who must deal with a Jim Jones-type, Kenpo Takebayashi, head of a religious cult who promises a utopia if the members heed his word. To Kenpo the end justifies the means, so to maintain his commune he raids assorted financial institutions with the assistance of selected men from the devoted, labeled the Red Masks because of the costumes they wear during the robberies. The failure of the authorities to apprehend the band sees the Moon Mask Rider entering the fray with his unique brand of audacity and defensive capabilities. As encounters continue between

false hope and true hero, the sanity of the commune's leader becomes questionable when he determines that all the utopians must die because only through a traitor in his ranks could his plans have been thwarted at each turn by the hero in white. Moon Mask Rider not only does in the Red Masks and the lunatic leader, but, playing a latter day Robin Hood, he donates to the poor a percentage of the booty recovered from the gang.

Interweaving incredible motorcycle chases, awesome stunt work and physical action, the \$1.2 million venture has a merchandise campaign just as incredible in the marketing of cartoon books, masks, dolls, toy bikes, T-shirts, windbreakers and a soundtrack score. "The merchandising program will become even more diversified," said Michio Yoshizaki, European representative of the Tokyo-based company, "but we are concentrating on the more popular items immediately."

THE MOON MASK RIDER. A Nippon Herald Films, Inc. Production. Executive producer: Kohan Kawauchi. Director: Yukihiko Sawada. Produced by Hiromitsu Furukawa, Hisao Masude. Screenplay by Kohan Kawauchi, Yukihiko Sawada. Based on the novel by Kohan Kawauchi. Music by Kohan Kawauchi. Cast: Daijuke Kuwabara, Etsuko Shiori, Takuya Fujoka, Takeo Chi, Hosai Komatsu. Motorcycle designed by Takuya Yura. "Moon Mask Rider" costume designed by Setsu Asakura. Released in 1981.





**GODZILLA to
DESTROY ALL
MONSTERS:
The Cycle of the
Technological
Monster**

1:30 (B) Movie—Thriller

"Podan, The Flying Monster."
(Japanese, 1956) A million-year-old egg hatches and out pops another monster. Kenji Sawara, Yumi Sharakawa.

TV Guide, November 17, 1972, p. A-83

Late night television addicts usually respond to Inoshiro Honda's films with comments similar to the **TV Guide** blurb above. And to some degree the statement is appropriate, as the films appear to be little more now than when they were released: cultural artifacts from the mutated fifties and crazy sixties. Most of the twenty films that followed **GODZILLA** were probably made to reap the monetary rewards from American teenager's parents, in the tradition of Hollywood production successes. Again using the late night watcher's acumen, the films have "poor (at least unrealistic in terms of Hollywood's big studio special effects departments) models" and unconvincing rear screen projections; the dubbing is nothing but comical; and the monsters are not in the least way frightening, even to me as a ten year old when I first saw **GODZILLA** in 1956. In books or articles on horror/science fiction films, Honda's works are briefly mentioned, and then dismissed as poor imitations of the better films of the genre. As I have steadily and repeatedly watched the reruns and the rereruns of the films on television, the

"monsters" have become more aesthetically pleasing and the concept of technology, as bastardized science, that they represent has become more revealing. Revealing in this sense: The films must be examined or seen as a cycle; thus altogether, they present a progression in the changing aspects of the technology presented.

The Formula

long shot: monster approaching city;
med shot: citizens scrambling out of projected path;
cut to: monster rampaging through buildings, electric lines, etc.;
cut to: light shot: crowd running, abandoning cars, screaming, etc.;
cut to: light shot: monster destroying cars, tromping people, etc. etc. etc. until monster is driven from city (temporarily) by surplus WWII weaponry, leaving major sector of city in ruins.

Any viewer who has sat through more than three of Honda's films looks forward to the above destruction-of-Tokyo scene much as one waits for the ritualistic prayer at Thanksgiving dinners. The scene is invariably in all of the films; sometimes other cities are destroyed and a few more thousand people die,

but each of his films will have at least one such scene. Whether the monsters are fighting among themselves (**WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS**, **GODZILLA VS. THE THING**), or individually causing havoc (**GODZILLA**, **MOTHRA**, **ATRAGON**), or aliens battling the city (**DOGORA**, **THE SPACE MONSTER**, **INVASION OF THE ASTRO-MONSTER**), the filmic execution remains the same. And the editing and the progression of the editing is not original; it follows the same plan as the first monster-destroying-city that was present in **THE LOST WORLD** (1925) and its successor, **KING KONG** (1933). In fact, Eiji Tsuburaya, Honda's special effects man, became interested in film only after he had seen **KING KONG**.¹ I suppose his tribute was the making of **KING KONG VS. GODZILLA** (1962), in which his creation meets the distant relative. The destruction scene ritual with its unchanging execution and progression serves several functions. It allows for reuse of similar footage throughout the films, and more importantly, it is a means for the viewer to detach himself from the violence. The viewer is allowed to coldly examine without participation the death and destruction that can befall mankind through his own technological inventions. Honda's destruction scenes

Below left: Production still from **GODZILLA**, in the studio tank. Below right: The late effects director Eiji Tsuburaya making adjustments to the large flying miniature from **MOTHRA**. "The monster becomes a symbol for the bomb-technology, and the destruction that it creates must be ritually viewed and reviewed in order to accept and then to overcome the inherent fear."

by Lawrence Wharton





seem to be an attempt to lessen the horror of the "day after" news films of Hiroshima/Nagasaki.² These two cities, as I can remember, are never destroyed or even mentioned in any of the films. In a sense, the monster becomes a symbol for the bomb-technology, and the destruction that it creates must be ritually viewed and reviewed in order to accept and then to overcome the inherent fear.

Technology As Plot

Again: The monster becomes a symbol for technology, and in Honda's films the view of technology goes through a definite progression from fear to acceptance, negative to positive.

In the earlier films (GODZILLA, RODAN) the monsters are released from their hiding places within the earth (where they have been for thousands of years—in myth) as a negative consequence of nuclear testing. Destruction of the monster is secondary to creating a **new technology** that will overcome him, and thus, the bomb technology as well. In GODZILLA, as in many of the films, conventional weaponry of WW II is tried and found to be useless against such superior strength. Everything from pistols to rocket launchers (or whatever the correct military term) cannot penetrate his skin. Enter Dr. Serizawa, a research scientist working on a new and more advanced weapon. His technology subdues the monster, but destroys him (He commits suicide) in the process. Society still cannot accept the awesome power of science: The scientist and the monster are killed. However, Dr. Serizawa's assistant and friend (who were also the participants of the love sub-plot) safely watch the ritualistic deaths from aboard ship, ready to take over "where he left off."

Since the monsters are not created, but awakened from the earth, they must be destroyed so that they will not return. In the first four films they are, but after MOTHRA (1961), the monsters are no longer destroyed; they are forced to return to their hiding places. This could make their reoccurrence more credible

Above left: Production shot of the Earth team's landing on the moon in *BATTLE IN OUTER SPACE*. Below left: Mogera, the robotic scout sent by THE MYSTERIANS. Above right: KING KONG VS. GODZILLA. Below right: The zoological exhibition in *DESTROY ALL MONSTERS*. "The monster becomes a symbol for technology, and in Honda's films the view of technology goes through a definite progression from fear to acceptance, negative to positive."

as they return in later films, but this kind of allowance for motivation seems a bit shallow, since all other aspects of the films are incredible at the outset. As Hiroshima was a type of "real" warning signal to the rest of the world that man and his technology might have gone too far, in the fantasy of the film the monsters return as the same type of warning.

The Guiding Hand

By the late 1950's, the bomb scare was waning, America had rejected bomb shelters and McCarthyism, and the cold war assumed Phase II: the "space-race." The UFO sightings had reached "frightening" numbers all over the world. Technology was going skyward. Honda's films began to incorporate these new fears. In *THE MYSTERIANS* and *BATTLE IN OUTER SPACE*, the destruction of Tokyo is caused by the aliens: The fear of man's self destruction (via his testing of nuclear devices that release the monster) is replaced by the fear of "alien" invasion. In these alien-invasion films of Honda's cycle, the conquering scientist is heralded as a hero, uniting the whole world in a common cause to fight against the invaders. It is the Japanese who discover the technological means to rid the earth of the menace: Technology can save the world! and it comes from the country that the bomb-technology nearly destroyed.

With the release of *KING KONG VS. GODZILLA* the view of technology in Honda's films becomes positive, that of acceptance. In this film as well as others, the monster camp is divided between the "good" and the "bad." Godzilla returns to drive King Kong out of Tokyo: The positive aspect of technology triumphs over the negative one. In *WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS* (1965), the good brother kills the evil one, out of love for a woman scientist (who resembles a Japanese Fay Wray). The monsters return to aid the cities that they previously (earlier films) destroyed.

In *DESTROY ALL MONSTERS* (1968) the progression is completed. No monster is destroyed or driven off. Alien invaders take control of the monsters and force them to destroy Tokyo: After a neat reversal, monsters aid the scientists in destroying the aliens. The scientists' technology is used only to free the monsters from alien control. After the monsters succeed in aiding mankind, they return to their hiding places of their own free will. Apparently,

the monster will come again to aid man, when he is threatened by more advance alien technology. Society has accepted science and its manifestations as a means of salvation, and man is the controller.

With man as the guiding force behind scientific advancement, monsters are no longer created or needed to represent technological destruction; they have been replaced by men and computers that fail, or by aliens. Many of the new science fiction films deal with this fear: *FAIL-SAFE*, *DR. STRANGELOVE*, and the *ANDROMEDA STRAIN* place the fear in man himself, rather than in his creations. Obviously, Honda's films are extremely weak and superficial when compared to some of the more recent examples. They seem to have been made especially for late night television, and are shown only then after the better films of a "package" have been through two showings. For those who make the distinction, the Honda cycle of films should probably be called "movies" rather than "films." And even to those individuals, the name Honda is usually followed by "250." I am not urging that the films should receive special attention or consideration in "a new light," but ("as I see it") they seem to be emblematic of the progression of societal acceptance of technology. The technology, that is, of the post-bomb era, in which the culture has progressed from being repulsed by the newsreels of Hiroshima, to blandly watching the execution of a North Vietnamese soldier on the evening news: In the words of Alex: "A real horror show film." And like Alex before his

treatments, our dispassionate view of violence finds delight in watching the same destruction of Tokyo time-after-time-after-film; and is probably similar to the delight that we have while watching any stylized genre, from Noh plays to grade-B Westerns. We still have the fear of destruction (or extinction) through technology, but it is expressed in other ways: My fear of a Walden Two situation is probably as great as my father's fear of nuclear destruction during the early 1950's. Honda's films on the screen are not frightening; when viewed on a smallscreen television, they become surrealistic. But to me, so did the war in Viet Nam, and the biological/germ warfare testing grounds within a hundred miles from my house. ■

¹Arne Svensson, *SCREEN SERIES: JAPAN* (New York, 1971), p. 104.

²Susan Sontag discusses in detail the "Technological" view of violence in "The Imagination of Disaster," *AGAINST INTERPRETATION* (New York, 1969), p. 218.

Reprinted from *The Journal of Popular Film*, Vol. 3, No. 1, with text revisions.



WATER CYBORG

Travel back to 1966 for a publicist's behind-the-scenes view on the filming of a madman's sea-borne menace.

Toei's Tokyo studio at Ozumi, Nerima-ku, has been turned into a "Little Hollywood" where about 40 foreign talents are taking part in the filming of **WATER CYBORG**, a science fiction extravaganza in color. And except for a few, the foreign actors and actresses are all amateurs. They include Americans, Germans, Greeks and Turks, but to all appearances, they seem to be getting along splendidly with the Japanese directors and cameramen.

All more or less permanent residents here (in Japan), they have been recruited for the monster film which requires many roles to be filled by foreigners. Those taking minor roles are getting only 4,000 to 20,000 yen per day. But several are not new to the film profession.

Andrew Hughes, for example, has appeared in MGM, City Films (Paris) and Toho movies. Among the roles he has filled are those of the late Gen. Douglas MacArthur and Adolf Hitler. Businessman by profession and president of his own company, he is an actor by avocation and a member of the Tokyo Amateur Dramatic Club. In this Toei film, he plays the part of Professor Howard, a physicist.

Mike Daneen, manager of Pacific Television Corporation, plays the role of the mad scientist Dr. Heinn in the movie. John Wayne-like Eric Nelsen has been given the role of Dr. Moore, the arch-villain who turns out monsters called "cyborgs" from human captives in his plant deep under the Japan Sea. He plans to use these man-made monsters to wage war on the world.

Co-starring with Shinichi Chiba, Toei's action film star, is Peggy Neal, a demure blonde cutie just turned 19. She plays the role of camerawoman Jennie, while Chiba enacts Ken Abe, a reporter for a rival newspaper. Both Jennie and Abe are trying to learn the secret of Dr. Moore's underwater laboratory which is turning out the monster "cyborgs," and they fall in love with each other in the process.

Peggy, who has been picked for the leading feminine role from among a horde of applicants, is a junior at Sophia University's International Division. She is majoring in economics, political science and psychology. This is her first experience in motion pictures although she has been modeling since four. Although Peggy lived in Nagoya for two years as a child, she says she has all but forgotten Japanese. She expressed great gratitude to Chiba who is teaching her the finer points of acting. But knowing little English, he has to teach her mostly by gesture.

As for Chiba, he says it is more exhausting men-

tally to act with foreigners than Japanese because of the language barrier. But he says Peggy is a quick learner and has a great potential as an actress.

"Little Hollywood" at first was deeply troubled by the language difficulty. But even this barrier seems to have been surmounted, and the foreign talent and the Japanese movie-makers seem to be getting along splendidly now. Most of the credit for this must go to...assistant director Akira Tateno who has been acting as interpreter ever since shooting started. One of the assistants, however, wryly said he had lost almost 32 pounds in order to keep peace between the foreign talent and Toei staffers and to see to it that the shooting went on smoothly.

Director Hajime Sato also found it extremely taxing at first to work with actors and actresses of so many nationalities, but all that is over now, he said. Foreign people have a natural talent for acting and take orders like veteran troupers, he added.

WATER CYBORG, originally written by Toei and revised by RAM Films of the U.S., is a 100 million yen undertaking under the capable hands of Sato, Toei's No. 1 special effects film director. In the U.S., **...CYBORG** will be shown on TV in three installments before being released for theater-showing. William Ross, associate producer of RAM Films, said that if the thriller film proves successful in the U.S., RAM will produce at least 13 more similar films in Japan, probably at a rate of four a year.

The preceding is a reprint from the Japanese paper *The Yomiuri*, originally published June 2, 1966, just prior to the release of Toei Co., Ltd.'s genre production, **WATER CYBORG**. The anonymous author unfortunately found his subject of hype upon theatrical distribution in Japan falling to be commensurate to his enthusiasm.

Though **CYBORG** did see distribution in Japan on July 1, 1966, it was never broadcast on U.S. television in three installments as suggested by the author. A 1968 re-rerun by Teleworld, Inc. made the movie available to American TV as the feature entitled **TERROR BENEATH THE SEA**, but theatrical release in the U.S. never became a reality as had been hoped.

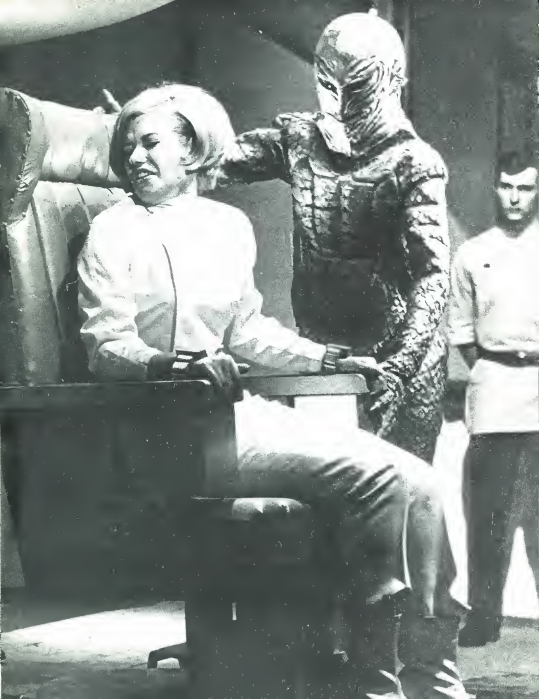
Ivan Reimer and Walter Manley's RAM Films did go on to co-produce with Toei two years later for the predominately English-language motion picture, like **WATER CYBORG**, called **THE GREEN SLIME**, originally titled for foreign sales as **BAT-**

TLE BEYOND THE STARS. The proposed thirteen picture deal described in the article failed to materialize.

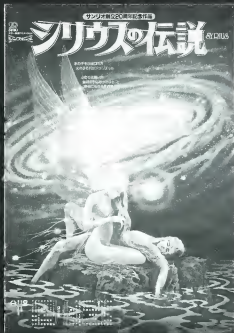
Manley's contact with Japanese fantasy films appears to have occurred several years earlier than RAM's dealing with Toei. It was in 1964 that a Walter Manley Enterprises, Inc. offered for television distribution four "Supergiant" movies compiled from Shiroh's eight-film series starring the man from the stars **EVIL BRAIN FROM OUTER SPACE**, **ATOMIC RULERS OF THE WORLD**, **INVADERS FROM SPACE**, and **ATTACK FROM SPACE**.

Shinichi Chiba, who in 1961 played the superhero Ironship in Toei's **SPACE GREYHOUND** and the lead in that studio's time warp film, **TIME SLIP**, in 1960, is most famous worldwide for the series of martial arts films from the seventies in which he starred as "The Streetfighter." Andrew Hughes, one of the film's co-stars, is better known for his "cameos" in a number of Toho's sf films to give their producers an international feel. Also billed as co-star, to Chiba's top billing, Peggy Neal can be seen as the feminine lead in Shinichi's 1967 monster flick, **THE X FROM OUTER SPACE**. Special effects director for the film is the venerable and very busy Nobuo Yamaji, whose distinguished career in the genre includes such titles for Toei as **MESSAGE FROM SPACE**, **THE INFERNAL**, the television shows **BATTLE FEVER J** and **SPIDER-MAN**, and for Shochiku, **DEMON POND**.

WATER CYBORG (KAITEI DAISENSO) Produced by Toei Co., Ltd. in association with Fuji Associates, Inc. Executive producer: Masafumi Soga and Tokyo First Film Co., Ltd. Producers: Kohji Kameda and Seichi Yoshino. Director: Hajime Sato. Screenplay: Kohichi Ohba. Based on an original story by Masam Fukuhashi. Director of photography: Kazuo Shimomura. Assistant director: Akira Tateno. Production manager: Masatoshi Kohno. Art director: Shinichi Enjo. Lighting technician: Toshiaki Morisawa. Sound recording: Kohichi Iwata. Music: Shunsuke Kikuchi. Editor: Fumio Sada. Director of special effects: Nobuo Yamaji. Underwater photography: Akira Tateishi. Released in Japan on July 1, 1966. Running time: 85 mins. Released to U.S. television in 1968 by Teleworld, Inc. Starring: Shinichi Chiba. Co-starring: Franz Gruber, Gunter Braun, Andrew Hughes, Eric Nelsen, Mike Daneen, Beverly Kiefer, Hideo Murota, Tsunji Mamechi, Hans Horner, John Kleins, Kohsaku Okano, Tadashi Suganuma.



LEGEND OF SYRIUS



Sanrio Co. is no stranger to fantasy and intends to keep it that way.

In 1979 the studio attempted a monument to Disney's *FANTASIA* in the guise of *WINDS OF CHANGE* (originally *METAMORPHOSIS*), an animated musical consisting of five tales of Ovid from ancient Greek myths. The continuity used to be the stories together was in the hands of a wide-eyed, energetic character named Wondermaker, who also took on assorted roles in each sequence. Mickey only did it once. New came

NUTCRACKER FANTASY, a stop-motion movie featuring over 400 puppets cavorting through a modified, though representative, version of E.T.A. Hoffmann's "The Nutcracker and the Mouseking," incorporating some of the familiar Tchaikovsky baller composition (See JFF's #13 for details on both films.) A Sanrio 1978 animated feature, *THE MOUSE AND HIS CHILD*, was an American film backed by Sanrio's money.

In May of 1978, during the filming of *WINDS OF CHANGE* and *NUTCRACKER FANTASY*, production



was underway on the animated picture *LEGEND OF SYRIUS*, in which Sanrio set about to create their own mythological view of the creation of the star, Syrius, the "nose" of the constellation Canis Major. In the tale, Themis, goddess of Fate, and her brother, Glaucos, god of Water, become divided by a fierce discord. The feud carries over to a chance meeting between Syrius, Prince of Water, and a child of Fire, Martha, when they learn each is of a family they have learned to hate and distrust. Yet, both fall in love, and continue secretly to rendezvous, though Syrius is forced to return home by daybreak each time they meet. A way exists for them to remain together forever, but Syrius fails to arrive at the appropriate time for the release of the spore from a certain grass during

a solar eclipse. Martha, believing she has been deceived by the youth, meanwhile, has begun the long pre-ordained rite of transformation into a protectress of Fire by her gradual entry into a golden cocoon. But she then spies Syrius who, exposed to the sun's rays, lay dying. Aware at last that he did love her, Martha lifts up the limp body to hers. Themis and Glaucos watch sadly, remembering the love that once existed between Fire and Water, so Glaucos sends a great watereup to take Syrius and Martha into the sky, setting them upon the last grass spore as it flies into the northern sky towards their star. 80,000 sheets of drawings were required for *SYRIUS*, each cut traced by hand rather than duplicated by the Xerox technique popularized by the animators at Disney. The crew necessary to get the film out on schedule, which included animators, artists, and trace painters, numbered more than seventy. After filming, scoring, editing and so on,

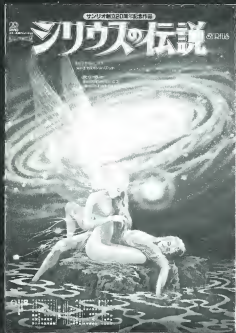
the lecture was completed in June of 1981. *SYRIUS* premiered in Japan July 18 of that same year, in distribution by Nippon Herald, itself a familiar name in the field of animation, and remained on the list of top money-makers for many weeks thereafter.

Sanrio is quite proud of the finished product, having set Syrius up as the paragon to emulate, most obvious in the *WINDS OF CHANGE* perils to *FANTASIA*. In a letter from the company's distribution manager, Tadashi Nagase, this pleasure is expressed: "We have produced several full-annihilation films, aiming to come up with Disney's masterpiece *FANTASIA*. By *LEGEND OF SYRIUS*, I dare say, we at last achieved this aim." If the Japanese success of *SYRIUS* is an indication, Sanrio indeed may be on to something.

LEGEND OF SYRIUS (SHIRIUSU NO DANSETSU). Executive producer: Shun'ichi Tsuji. Director: Masami Hata. Screenplay: Chie Katsura, Masami Hata. Music: Koichi Sugiyama. Directors of animation: Shigeru Yamamoto, Kanji Akabori. Editor: Masashi Furukawa. Voices: Toru Furuya (Syrius), Mami Koyama (Martha), Ken Utsumi (Glaucos), Reiko Muto (Themis).

Photo spread: Martha and Syrius in a happier moment. Inset: One of the exquisite posters used to promote the film.

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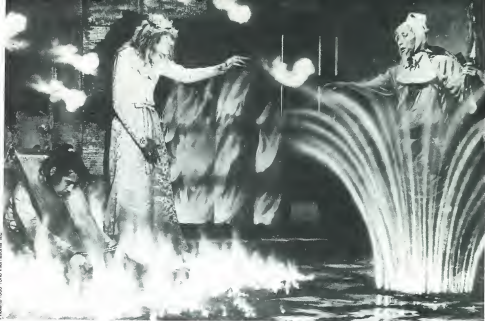
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THE TOHO LEGACY

Five prolific years of a fantasy film career in retrospect

In this chapter of our discussion on Toho fantasy, horror, and science fiction films, it will become evident that cloning does not solely belong to the scientific community, for Toho International, confident that success of its monster melodramas could continue unabated, pursued a course of imitation in order to produce results again. Occasionally this goal was achieved, but the films became like each other.

In according to its doctrine, Toho streamlined scenarios, resulting in an ever-widening chasm which separated the human actors from the basis, an alienation which led to the latter's role-playing of human conflicts and emotions on a more gigantic stage. The live-action drama became of lesser importance and rarely was allowed to share those conflicts and emotions, the human stars merely spectators or Greek chorus to the creatures' conduct.

The simplification of Toho monster film evolution overshadows the merits of many productions which were issued between 1965 and 1969, as well as other endeavors in the genre whose contribution to Japanese fantasy is worthy of consideration.

1965

the living dead . . .

Long a part of Japanese filmmaking, ghost stories have never been associated with Toho. Though the studio produced the ghost-comedy *MY FRIEND DEATH* in 1960 and the surreal horror film *ONIBABA* in 1964, it wasn't until 1965 that the firm released its own serious ghost films: *KAIDAN*, the award-winning horror anthology whose screenplay was based on short stories in Lafcadio Hearn's collection, *Kaidan* (Ghost Story), and *ILLUSION OF BLOOD*. Kaidan's tales are mysterious and legendary, not unlike Hearn's life.

Born in 1850 at British-Greek parentage, Hearn led a disillusioned existence in France and then America. Elong a living as a journalist in the U.S., he was sent to Japan in 1891, falling in love with the country. Hearn satiated there, changed his name to Yakumo Kazumi, married, and lived as a Japanese citizen until his death in 1904. He was the first popular writer to meaningfully interpret for Western readers much of the Japanese culture and folkways. Careful observation and a thorough and patient understanding of the Japanese, their customs, and history allowed

Hearn to lend accuracy to the subjects treated in his simple, lyric style. Most of his work, concerned with the bizarre, the eerie, and the pathetic, became incorporated into traditional literature in Japan. Though this material was suitable for transfer to film, it was an avenue none of the other studios had explored.

Toho's picture, released in the United States as *KWAIDAN* where it garnered an Academy Award for "Best Foreign Film" of 1965, portrays a centuries-old period of myth, decoration and ceremony in its retelling of four of Lafcadio Hearn's narratives. The least of the stories is the brief *In a Cup of Tea* (*Chawan No Naka*), an "irishly puckish tale," *Newsweek* called it, missing from the U.S. print, which tells of a fearless samurai who drinks the face of a young samurai reflected in the bottom of a tea cup. The young man's visit to the home of the older warrior for the return of his soul erupts into a heated argument whereupon the young samurai's throat is cut, and he disappears. Three ethereal friends of the youth return for revenge, setting the stage for the O'Henry-esque conclusion in which the older man's wife witnesses the image of her husband beckoning from a bowl.

The Black Hair (*Kurokami*) is the most clearly painted portion of the anthology, a style used for ironic effect in its climax. Here, a poor samurai drawn by the promise of wealth and power in the

by Greg Shoemaker

offer of an influential job and the hand of the governor's daughter, leaves his wife, only to find his new spouse and life unable to match his expectations. Sadder but wiser, feeling the love of his wife still gnawing from within, the samurai returns to a neglected home and landscape now overgrown with weeds, yet his wife retains her beauty and youth. Following a night of lovemaking, the man awakens, horrified by the skeleton lying beside him; his wife's hair turned a ghostly white.

Shown separately in England, the third tale, *The Woman in the Snow* (Yuki-onna), is an oft-filmed Japanese legend, and in KAIJAN possibly best displays the cold, frightening, over-powering creature of the tale. She is the snow maiden who promises to spare the life of a young woodcutter on one condition. He must keep secret the death of his friend by the woman's deep-freeze breath. The woodcutter eventually marries, living happily with his wife for years until he learns she is the snow maiden of long ago.

In the final tale, *Hoichi The Earless* (Minimashi Hoichi), a blind Biwa musician has become entranced into playing for the spirits of the Heike samurai killed in a battle at sea. A high priest is warned that Hoichi's soul has been captured by the dead, making the youth believe he is playing in a Heike noble's courtyard, rather than the family graveyard in which he performs every night. To protect the musician, the high priest inscribes Buddhist text on the boy's skin, except for the ears. When the youth fails to appear at the cemetery, the ghost of a Heike samurai comes for Hoichi, but because of the religious writings on his body, all but the musician's ears remain invisible to the spirit. Hoichi's ears are torn from his head in a furious struggle, and the warrior leaves, never to return.

Throughout the last episode, as the Biwa player entertains the fallen warriors, the Heike legend is re-told via live-action battle footage interspersed with scenes from an old mural depicting the conflict in which the Heike lost their lives, the mural being animated by a "moving" camera. The "essence of the beauty of the tale is its mingling of past and present, magic and reality," said *Newsweek*. "The graveyard is a verdant glade, the will-o-wisps might be clouds, the headstones might be Piet ruins, and the boy singing songs to vanquished shades might be a blind Homer summoned back by Achilles to tell the old heroic tale anew."

Paying homage to a formalized and graceful sense of pace, order, and form, KAIJAN is the prodigy of director Masaki Kobayashi who spent 10 years planning the picture, one year filming, and nearly one million dollars producing the 164 minute, color ghost film. Kobayashi, who opts for a lyric style of careful composition, uses the approach to furnish KAIJAN with moments of strange and serene beauty, evoking legend through the interplay of stylized sets and color.

Toho's second ghost effort for 1985, *ILLUSION OF BLOOD*, set during an aged era lacking moral backbone, is based upon a classic Kabuki ghost drama in which a destitute and desperate samurai's fight to survive is debased by fierce ambition. The masterless samurai, feeling he is a victim of the aimless times, pledges to locate another master, stopping at nothing to meet his end, including the murder of his wife. Deeper he sinks into a world of vengeance, death and madness until the man's disgraced wife returns to haunt him, driving the samurai insane.

Critics favorably compared the film to KAIJAN for the picture, apparently influenced by KAIJAN's success, casts a similar macabre spell. The audience, said Kevin Thomas in his commentary for the *Los Angeles Times*, "is drawn in to the realm of the supernatural where the line



Facing page: Embellished still from *ADVENTURES OF TAKLA MAKAN*, with Toshio Mifune, left. This page: *FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD*, stars Nick Adams and Kumi Mizuno, right. Adams and Mizuno return in *INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER*, middle. Takekshi Shimura, in center of bottom still, from "Hoichi the Earless" episode of horror anthology, *KAIJAN*.



between reality and fantasy blurs and where scenes of horror are transformed into images of beauty." One review went on to warn that ILLUSION OF BLOOD was scarier than NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, that the film made PSYCHO as effective as "Punch and Judy."

Any insight or boldness is due to director Shiro Toyoda, whose hands shaped LEGEND OF THE WHITE SERPENT (1957) and PORTRAIT FROM HELL (1969). Toyoda's statement often concerns the freedom of the individual versus the demands of society, usually displayed as sympathy for the young.

Rather than simply recreating a fictional past, FRANKENSTEIN VERSUS BARAGON manages to bring a fictional past into the fictional present by reviving the Frankenstein story in post-atomic Hiroshima. Japanese scientists in Hiroshima receive from Nazi Germany a box containing the living heart of the Frankenstein monster, but as they begin their evaluation of it, the atom bomb is dropped. Ten years later, scientists discover a wild boy lurking around the ruins of the old laboratory, and upon studying him theorize that his ever-increasing strength and stature are the result of atomic radiation bombarding the Frankenstein heart. The boy eventually reaches a height of 100 feet and winds up battling a giant monster called Baragon whose rampaging appearance has paralleled his. During the engagement, an earthquake splits open the terrain, and both giants are taken to their death.

The Frankenstein legend is more than Mary Shelley's vivid imagination. It is all the filmic misrepresentations that have succeeded the publication of the famous novel. What would be more appropriate than to incorporate this legend with the giant monster genre? The progression has a basis logged in fantasy film history wherein Willis O'Brien planned to put on celluloid an animated, giant Frankenstein monster. Toho's version, while adhering to Universal's concept with built-up forehead, dark, matted hair, and gaunt face, has accentuated this with large protruding teeth, a thin, wiry physique clothed in animal fur, and, of course, size.

The boy is the end result of misapplied atomic technology. His inability to cope, his destructive focus for security and food, are beyond his control. At every turn he is hounded by the military who believe him the menace, or by the scientists who want him for study. Baragon is the threat—and man. Man fought this mutant. Because of what he is, the boy must die. Yet the viewer's belief in him is affirmed when he under-

takes the Baragon menace. As the youth had demonstrated his mettle, and deeming death by the military an unflinching end, Nature takes the giant in the tumultuous climax, leaving mankind to contend with its conscience.

The lead roles receive a goodly portion of the script's attention, permitting a glimpse of relationships and motivations, especially in scenes between Nick Adams, as medical scientist Dr. James Bowen, and Kumi Mizuno, his female counterpart. Suetaka Togami, in after-hours intimacy. This strength is also expressed in the affection Mizuno endows for the evolving boy and he, in turn, for her due to the scientist's understanding and sympathy.

Nick Adams' role, an apology for the American bombing raid on Japan, necessitates no need for dubbing, freeing the actor from the monotone vocalization and life dialogue associated with dubbing for American release; and, fortunately, the Japanese players have been treated well with their English voices and lines. Adams underplays his performance of a determined though calculating doctor who maintains a warmth and consideration for his associates, friends, and life in general.

Adams was pleased to have made the film in that it enabled him to remain in the public eye, his popularity on the wane in America. His pleasure extended to the production personnel, evident in a 1966 interview he provided for Modern Monsters magazine in which he vocalized his respect for director Ishiro Honda and leading performers Mizuno and Tadao Takashima. The use of Adams may also have pleased Toho, offering them an opportunity to rebuild the lackluster monster motion picture market, solely for the U.S. it would appear. If Adams' employ provided stimulus, its effect is unknown, but he must have found the work agreeable, and Toho similarly, for that same year Adams would be contracted for another monster piece, INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER, and Toho's spy film, THE KILLING BOTTLE, his last few efforts before a tragic, suicidal death.

Toho's INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER, retitled MONSTER ZERO for American release in 1970, races headlong to its conclusion through an infusion of constantly shifting locale, a barrage of monster wars and destruction sequences, and action oriented visual effects. In this respect, the film acquires an approach used by Honda and Tezuka for their sf war film, THE MYSTERIANS. One seldom has time to catch one's breath due to the unrelenting pace which succeeds in capturing the viewer's attention.

The exploration of Planet X reveals that its scientifically advanced inhabitants exist underground since the surface is under domination of Monster Zero, known to the people of Earth as King Ghidorah (the correct Japanese name for the beast, though the Americanized version of his first film listed him as Ghidrah). The aliens offer astronauts who have landed on X an exchange—a drug to cure all Earth diseases for the loan of Godzilla and Rodan to drive off Monster Zero. The two Earth beasts are transported to the planet where they effectively rid it of the triple-headed threat, but then, instead of receiving the promised formula, Earth is the recipient of an ultimatum. Surrender or be destroyed by the three monsters now in the aliens' control. An interplanetary war ensues, and Rodan, Godzilla, and King Ghidorah are unleashed upon Japan until it is learned that an inventor's pocket alarm renders the invaders and their controlling transmission useless, foiling the conquest.

The film's most magical sequence involves the alien's preparation and eventual granting of Godzilla and Rodan to Planet X. It begins as a "rescue grid" emanates from beneath the invader's hovering saucers. A series of "lightning-bolt" rays lifting up the ponderous chachiras translate to a series of ring-like oscillations which pulsate from top to bottom of the gravity-defying beasts. The rings dissolve to a bluish-white membrane, oval in shape, which eventually envelopes each creature totally. The membranous effect is conveyed by an opaqued, soft-edge which gradually to complete transparency fully disclosing the cargo, similar in appearance to 2001's star-child.

The picture's live-action leads are not so intriguing, nor are they well-developed. The film's major drawback, however, is mediocre dubbing of godawful voices and comic book dialogue. In this highly incredulous genre, one of the requirements for audience acceptability is realistic speech. The villains, all graduates from the "Snooty Whipsnatch School of Voice," are an example of the failure in this area. Even though Nick Adams does not have to suffer from dubbing, his performance falls far short of that in FRANKENSTEIN VERSUS BARAGON, whipping off wisecracks as a hot-shot space pilot in derring-do with sidekick Akira Takanada who does suffer under the post-swing voice of Marvin Miller. Adams' quips are better left to James Bond.

The final entry for 1965 is THE ADVENTURES OF TAKLA MAKAN, an adventure fantasy ensconced in magic and the occult. The film is set during the year 700 when Japanese survivors of a sailing disaster find themselves awash on Chinese soil, a China unfriendly to Japan. One of the living is a seaman named Otsumi, played by Toshiro Mifune, who wanders five years following a separation from his friends. Upon reunion, they travel the famed Silk Road into the desert of Takla Makan in search of the ashes of Buddha, encountering, during their travels, bandits, wizards, fierce armies, giant birds, beautiful women, and an array of evil Far Eastern blackguards.

1966 crazy adventures . . .

Terror fills a rainy night along the coast of Japan as men and boats are dragged into the sea. A scientist called in to solve the dilemma discovers the undying cells of the gargantuan. It is determined that a green gargantuan survives in the sea while another, brown in color, inhabits the mountains. When the green giant attacks the cities of man, his brown brother tries to dissuade him, failing in the attempt. With this ideological

split, the two engage in a struggle-to-the-finish in the heart of Tokyo, finally shifting the scene of battle to the waters off Tokyo where both succumb to a new-born volcano.

WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS is a sequel to Toho's 1965 film, FRANKENSTEIN VS. BARAGON, a point delineated by three facts. (1) The pre-production title for WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS was THE FRANKENSTEIN BROTHERS. (2) In the American version dialogue mentions a regeneration of cells theory which appears in FRANKENSTEIN VERSUS BARAGON to explain the re-growth of the Frankenstein boy's hand following the loss of one in an escape attempt. (3) The leading scientist's monologue/flashback recounts the discovery and origin of the youth. It is interesting to note that throughout the entire WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS screenplay the name "Frankenstein" is never mentioned. Instead, dialogue describes the boy's eventual destruction and subsequent resurrection as two separate monsters from regeneration of the destroyed giant's cells. The green golemh borne up from the seas is a malcontent, while a brown twin raised in the mountains is gifted with a more benevolent nature. Gracily, his sole creations, neither duplicate the monster youth in FRANKENSTEIN VERSUS BARAGON.

Sympathy for the beasts is aroused from their happenstance birthing and forced fugitive lifestyle. Affection is transposed to the brown gargantua when the disposition difference is introduced. A very agonizing moment for the brown monster occurs when he attempts to instruct his green brother in morals and receives a physical whipping from the student. Even if both were to be law-abiding, their chances of survival would be nil. Meddling fingers would soon be strangling the gargantuas' very life and freedom, trapped in a world they, like the Frankenstein monster before them, never made. Empathy lessons near film's end from a scenario which builds an invisible wall between the gargantuas and the human actors who have already shared few moments together. Apart from some gratuitous crowd panic scenes, the streets are extraordinarily sterile, mankind nearly imperceptible.

Featured in the pivotal human role is American actor Russ Tamblyn who essays a character that continues the one begun by Nick Adams in FRANKENSTEIN VERSUS BARAGON, here also sharing his traumas and after-work moments with Kumi Mizuno who re-enacts her earlier performance. Contact with a monster this time has her being rescued by the brown gargantua when she becomes stranded on a mountain precipice.

A final similarity to FRANKENSTEIN VERSUS BARAGON can be found in WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS' ambiguous finale. The audience is left to assume the monsters have either succumbed to the volcanic furnace or have been temporarily put in stasis for unleashing at a later time.

Note: A "devil-fish," the cryptic cephalopod shown in combat with the Frankenstein boy in publicity stills for FRANKENSTEIN VERSUS BARAGON, but which is not featured in any of the footage, makes a belated appearance in the brief prologue to WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS. The manonette is handled with great finesse in its attack upon a miniature ship and in its sea duel with the green gargantua who effectively battles the tentacled monstrosity to victory.

Mystery surrounds Toho fantasy films not unlike that surrounding the uncovered treasures of some Egyptian king. Information that is available seems often to contradict itself, obscure titles surface with little to allow in the manner of comment or description. Such is the case with THE MAN FROM PLANET ALPHA, a sf comedy by Takashi Tsushima for Watanabe Produc-



Facing page: Godzilla and giant lobster battling in EBIRAH, HORROR OF THE DEEP. This page: Kumi Mizuno at the mercy of the mutant monstrosities, top; Russ Tamblyn attempts a rescue in WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS, top; says Nakada, in bandages, discusses with a plastic surgeon the effects resulting when he wears THE FACE OF ANOTHER, in the bottom still.



LEGACY

1967 ape: to mimic . . .

On a tropical island in the South Seas, experiments by the Weather Observation and Research Team alter the atmospheric conditions of the isle. As a result, temperatures have soared, and its effect has caused oversized flora and fauna to take hold of the island, including the son of Godzilla who has just recently hatched. A giant spider and enormous mantises turn their hungry eyes toward the infant, but the parent rescues his son from becoming someone's lunch. The scientists, meanwhile, try to regain a foothold on their problem, attempt another experiment which lowers the temperature, transforming Sol-Gel into a land of ice and snow. A rescue submarine transports the researchers homeward, leaving behind Godzilla and son in unexpected hibernation.

As SON OF GODZILLA unspools, the struggles facing the scientific personnel take a back seat to the pitfalls facing parent and son, including the education of the young monster in such matters as breathing radioactive fire. Human emphasis is gradually reemitted in the quest to reverse the stifling heat and squelch an impending death from an environment gone berserk. That the scientists prevail offers relief and a positive conclusion to man's forced entry into nature's domain, although neither experiment achieves the goal that researchers set for themselves. Fear for the fate of the little reptile is also put to rest as the scenario alludes to an unfilmed sequel in which he and his father will awaken to an island returned to normalcy, the mutant life-forms killed off during the freeze.

Paucity of optical effects and dastardly miniatures is balanced by a reliance upon latex, wood, plastic and metal-composed beasts chewing up the scenery. Godzilla's low profile permits attention to be focused upon his son, a wide-eyed, pint-sized replica of father minus wrinkles and scales. The youth's rambunctiousness to locate some new fascination results in situations more troublesome than anticipated, leaving dad to resolve the dilemma.

The troublesome situations are in the form of the Gimmis (or Gammagoras), the enlarged mantises parading the island, and Spigas, a hairy spider of similar proportions. The creatures are marionettes whose movements are a credit to manipulator and/or chief of marionettes effects, Fumio Nakada. Judicious planning has the insects maneuvering on the far side of miniature pawns to delicately obscure any flaw of their walking cycle. Spigas is supplemented with internal mechanics which allow quavering mandibles, the jutting of a fang, sewing machine needle-like in and out of his mouth, and the spraying of a sticky, web-like substance used to ensnare victims.

SON OF GODZILLA favors idyllic freedom and the symbolic relationship between man and his environment. A lithe, native woman, mated into a miniature jungle setting, calls the infant beast in a fitting intonation. The son appears, and the woman tosses him large ripened fruit via cartoon animation. The teasing prompts the babe to follow her until she is lost from sight. Godzilla's son remembers this moment later in the film when, beleaguered by monsters on the island, the native produces her jungle cry, summoning the little beast to her aid. He is unable to affect a concrete victory, but his interference allows the woman an avenue of escape.

The feeding sequence prompts a recollection of the banana-losing scene between Terry

tions/Toho in 1966. The film stars the singing group The Crazy Cats in a sort of PAJAMA PARTYMARS NEEDS WOMEN/VISIT TO A SMALL PLANET combined. Another obscure entry in the genre is a picture entitled CRAZY ADVENTURE which Walt Lee lists in his Reference Guide: Hitler still lives and plots to destroy the world. Also included in this mad fantasy is a man in a flying suit.

The madness of 1966 continues with EBIRAH, HORROR OF THE DEEP, pitting Godzilla against a lobster-like creature in league with the Letchians, a mysterious faction bent on world domination. The film was channeled directly to American television as GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER, a title change well-suited due to the eventual confrontation of the two giants and the less commercial viability of the mutant lobster's name. Mothra enters the tale in a rescue of her island people who have become prisoners forced into slave labor by the Letchians. The again-ennervated Godzilla holds off Ebirah while the human protagonists, freed by Mothra, thwart the Letchians by blowing apart their island fortress. Godzilla and Mothra survive the blast, each going his or her own way to further adventures.

Ebirah, whose role is reminiscent of the mythic beasts whose destiny it was to test the fortitude and cunning of men in their quests for fortune, in this film acting as guardian of the island, is of rose-salmon coloration and exquisite detail. The propitious decision for the chthonic creation to maintain a low profile in the water diminishes the problem of exposing the two "working" legs of the man in the suit against the counterfeited appendages. The credibility of Ebirah, as well as Godzilla and the film itself, is strained when the creatures, following an initial volley by Godzilla, bat an enormous boulder back and forth until an aberrant wallow sends the rock hurtling into a section of the Letchian stronghold.

The film, in fact, is a mélange of thrusts, weaving fantasy, espionage, monster battles, world conquest, and a South Sea adventure into a patchwork that is confusing and mismatched. And padded. A chattering-naïve sequence, choreographed in Broadway-ese, summoning Mothra to rise in retribution to the ill being done to her savants by the Letchians (a rather neglected god, that), is the epitome of the filler. The posturing is extensively interspersed into a major part of the footage, instilling such viewer apathy that Mothra's last minute rescue is without impact.

Contrivance is also evident in a short-lived piece in which a very large eagle takes two un-

premeditated attacks upon Godzilla. The sea beast fires his retribution, setting the soaring bird's wings aflame, and the eagle crashes headlong into the palisades of a cliff, a scene suggestive of the jet attack on Gigantis (Godzilla) in the climax of that earlier motion picture.

Budget restriction limits the scope of Ebirah, most obvious in the minimal and lackluster visual effects and in the sparse set pieces: the unambitious Letchian fortress and the stage on which the infant Islanders prostrate themselves to Mothra. The compromising style and eccentricities of EBIRAH were shared in later Toho monster films by the decision to have the films set in a tropical environment as a means of economizing through re-use of props, sets and miniatures: SON OF GODZILLA ('67), KING KONG ESCAPES ('67), DESTROY ALL MONSTERS ('68), GODZILLA'S REVENGE ('69), and SPACE AMOEBRA ('70), new effects work diminished in favor of gimmolting stock footage from other Toho productions. These measures denied the fantasy, the creativity, the magic that at one time permeated the films.

Why EBIRAH, HORROR OF THE DEEP is obvious in its presentation, THE FACE OF ANOTHER, directed by Hiroshi Teshigahara of WOMAN IN THE DUNES' fame, is not. The metaphysical thriller-allegory is an avant-garde statement of man's existential choice of existence versus self-imposed personality. The complex film finds a man, his face scarred by fire, obtaining a life-like mask of a stranger. He believes that only with an ordinary face can he maintain relationships with people around him, including his wife who has refused the man's romantic advances when his face was wrapped in bandages. The man begins to lead a double life, experiencing a dreadful freedom that propels him to experiment with the emotions of those he had known before the accident. The mask becomes the director's indictment of the disguise worn by all who must conceal their thoughts.

Hollywood Reporter's John Mahoney, "Teshigahara is frequently heavy-handed and occasionally indulges in intensely personal obscurities in making his point, but the whole is always brilliantly fascinating, richly styled and distinctly provocative. Eschewing pat sermonizing and what he calls 'cheap humanity,' he is willing to deliberately confuse. The climax, in which the now-psychotic man in the mask frees himself by killing the (plastic) surgeon amidst a rush of human traffic in identical masks is at once brilliant and disturbing."

Moore and Mighty Joe Young in Wills O'Brien's 1949 film, while WHEN DINOSAURS RULE THE EARTH appears to have lifted the remainder of the vignette for the Victoria Vetrilbaby dinosaur section of the 1971 motion picture. As well, SON OF GODZILLA's relationship to films of its parent company is evident in the film's insertion of humor, although here achieved without sledgehammer inclination, and in use of beasts with humanistic traits.

1967's second genre film, KING KONG ESCAPES, re-introduces the great anthropoid, in hiatus for 5 years, in a story whose scientific notion supercedes the adventure and romanticism of the 1933 KING KONG. Woven into the fabric are the threads of good versus evil, exemplified by maniacal villains, blaze heroes, and helpless heroines. Dated in this viewpoint at the time of its release, the picture reeks of "camp." The hollowness of the film is evident in the dead-pan performances of the actors who matter-of-factly discuss tense moments in the script. The only threat evident to the audience is the overfueled looking of horns between the real and artificial ape.

A U.S. research submarine discovers an uncharted island inhabited by aggressive dinosaurs and sea-serpents, and by King Kong who saves the exploratory party from the menacing reptiles. Escaping in the sub, the investigators propose a return to the island to study Kong. At the North Pole, meanwhile, a villainous organization led by archfiend Dr. Who is mining a valuable radioactive mineral known as Element X, with excavation being accomplished by a giant, gorilla-like robot called Mechani-Kong. When the radioactive material renders the robot useless, Dr. Who dispatches a team to capture Kong and the once-retained U.N. research group. The ape, under a hypnotic trance, is put to work in the mines, but the pyro-technics created by the digging breaks the spell, and he escapes to Japan, unable to be controlled by the members of the U.N. team he befriended earlier. Dr. Who sends the robot Kong to battle the living ape atop Tokyo Tower, but the real Kong is victorious and destroys the evil doctor before swimming back to his tropic home.

Costuming of the new Kong is quite a contrast to Toho's earlier model. Smoothly furred and compact, Kong appears cute, almost teddy-bearish. His true heritage is vindicated by brutal confrontations against other giants he encounters. Throughout the film he maintains human nuances which offer him up as a more complex creature than is the norm. This Kong engenders the confused personality and strength of the original.

Kong's first battle success is against Gora-saurus, a monster derived from the prehistoric thunder lizard but who fails to emulate its ancestor's formidable power, speed, and muscled anatomy. Gora-saurus' true relative resides in THE LAND UNKNOWN where a similar creature awkwardly straddled the landscape in stilted movements, the man-in-suit latex costume undulating unrealistically. One wonders why Kong needed such labored exertions to defeat it in battle.

A Manda-like sea snake is a surprise only for its appearance so soon following the hub-bub upon Kong's island. This mannequin's sea-pan-note-worthy performance stems from the scale of the construction to be used in conjunction with a full-size man for a simulated fight sequence, in opposition to Manda's reduced scale for interaction with minisuits. Witness the failure of DeLaurentis' serpent in the KING KONG remake which faced a similar obstacle.

Kong's brilliant adversary is Mechani-Kong, an impressive specimen of robotics structured of shiny metals, streamlined and formed in the im-



Facing page: Toho's nod to Disney, SON OF GODZILLA. This page: Real and mechanical double confront each other, top, in KING KONG ESCAPES. The cry goes out to DESTROY ALL MONSTERS on the Toho back lot, center, the ultimate monster film produced as a 20th of its kind, Nabuko Otowa, bottom, one of the splints haunting the sets of KURONEKO (THE BLACK CAT).



Photo © 1983 Toho International, Inc.

age of his living counterpart, a tack taken by Toho in the seventies when a robot Godzilla was introduced. Equipped with a laser atop his dome, the robot's power is suggested from camera imagery. In Who's laboratory the feet of the mechanical marvel are shown on a plane with the camera. Live-action extras seen running to and fro before the metal appendages are on a scale minuscule in comparison. Tsuburaya opted for composing the negative matter of the actors on the footage rather than trying to drop in the positive image as detail would all but be lost. A vertical pan takes the eye up the full form of the giant, finally framing the intriguing gonle-like counterimage.

Ties to the original KING KONG are more plentiful in ESCAPES than in Toho's first attempt at the Kong legend. A blond-haired female on the U.N. research team piques the interest of the gorilla upon contact at the stream's uncharted home. Kong's encounters with a tyrannosaurus rex and giant sea snake are followed by the eventual downfall of the ape sedated by gas bombs for transport elsewhere. In captivity, he is used as a means to garner money and success for his "owner," but Kong escapes to war with a machine atop the tallest available structure, away from the insanity of the world which took him from his habitat.

The final entry in 1967 is a feature-length compilation of three episodes from the ULTRAMAN television series produced by Tsuburaya Production for distribution to theatres by Toho.

1968 monsterland . . .

KURONEKO (THE BLACK CAT) is enveloped in the mists of a long-dead age and in the mystique of the samurai, an individualist and primitive nearly archaic in his chivalric code. Filmically, the warrior can waver from being sanctity to villainous, heroic to cowardly, ingenious to thick-skulled, nearly everything a man can be in a dramatic situation—except civilized.

In a period consumed by a starving civilization, a roving band of samurai murder a woman and her 20-year-old daughter-in-law whose blood attracts a mysterious black cat. When the leader of the scurilous horde returns to the scene of the incident, two women greet his arrival. The next morning a lone corpse and black cat are all that

remain. One day the young woman's husband returns, finding his hut burned, his family missing. He is assigned the task of hiding the area of the two murdering apparitions, his mother and wife who have pledged their souls to the devil to avenge their deaths, and in so doing have sold forms again. The warrior, still bearing a love for his wife and mother, is threatened with his own death by a superior if he fails to destroy the ghosts, so he seeks out his mother and cuts off her arm to use as proof that the orders were complied with, but the older woman reappears to reclaim the limb. The young samurai, on the brink of insanity from the confusion and pressure heaped upon him, madly chases his mother and wife to the charmed hut. When dawn breaks, the light focuses on a black cat licking the forehead of the dead warrior amid the sootily falling snow.

Kaneto Shindo, director and author of the film, presents the world of the samurai peripherally, a bloodied world in which non-combatants, predominantly women, are swept up in the underflow of the sea of gore. The samurai myth is bedeviled by corrupted beauty and shattered innocence, as the women, accused by the atrocities of war, evolve into a thing more terrifying than the relatively simple men. It is an argument against war and the warrior caste system that lays waste to the land.

Shindo's statement is offered with a heavy directional hand, too insistent for its sake, such as in the feeding of the women on the blood of the dead samurai following vulgar and decadent seduction scenes, and in an eagerness to return to scenes of magic and blood which upsets the rhythm of the film. The picture's fantasy element acquires an unintentional humorous streak when the malevolent apparitions turn undignified cartwheels. The success of KURONEKO lies in the stylization of its journey into the supernatural, an approach for which the Japanese have a penchant, a hypnotic milieu which creates a hallucinatory atmosphere that is a bewildering fascination for the viewer.

Intense posturing is left behind for the simple pleasure of DESTROY ALL MONSTERS. Monsters run rampant in this film, Toho's 20th such production steeped in the tradition of its predecessors. Their story begins at the close of the 20th century, a time when all of Earth's monsters have been imprisoned on an island by an elaborate system of electronic shields. The calm is shattered by the failure of the shields and the release of the beasts. Following an attack on major cities around the globe by the escapees, it is

learned that aliens have caused the shield malfunction and are controlling the giants as part of a plan for terra conquest. A means to destroy the source of the alien force is discovered which is then used to steer the monsters in an attack on the invaders' Earth base, but the astir travelers summon Ghidorah to foil the offensive. All of the Earth beasts combine efforts to defeat the monster from outer space and complete destruction of the alien stronghold. The victory is prelude to an uneventful and peaceful retreat of the monsters to their island home called Ogasawara.

The prestigious ranking Toho awarded DESTROY ALL MONSTERS ceases to impress by the inordinately limited ideas of the scenario. The picture fails to better the genre it interprets, choosing to reinforce that which has been immortalized on film since 1954 and surprisingly misrepresenting the best. What once was one of the genre's assets, acting in new week, perfunctory, not unlike the vacuous speech of the alien invaders. The performers have made the same journey many times before; perhaps they are weary of the sights. Miniatures and monster photography are disrespectful as well. From all this, an imaginary source for the production's script, effects, etc. can be hypothesized as an output of a computer fed parameters of earlier films in an effort to seek an ultimate of its kind. One can only marvel at the frenetic activity, the visible display of an overwrought, self-indulgent monster film scenario, and the beasts as pawns in some grand, galactic game produced for the media. The climax, a "TV show-within-a-film," is a broadcast of the monsters on the "news." It's Godzilla leading the attack! A celebratory jig the creatures perform following their decisive victory becomes a fitting symbol of the deteriorating personality change each has undergone and a devaluing of the films in which all have appeared.

1969 a fresh assault . . .

GOZILLA'S REVENGE would be as comfortable on CBS' "Children's Film Festival" as on the silver screen. It is a morality play featuring less-than-terrifying monsters employed as a petting zoo for the child star who, by witnessing the antediluvians' "basic" social struggles, extrapolates these struggles into a world of human beasts and parental problems.

A casualty of working parents, Ichiro, the bull of harassment by other children, often retreats to his home where he dreams of Monster Island. Though frightened by the very beasts he wants to befriend, the dreaming lad becomes companion to Miya, Godzilla's son, who is able to shrink to Ichiro's size and grow to normal height at will. Miya leads the youth through his dreams to watch Godzilla and son defend themselves against an assortment of creatures. Startled from his sleep by the appearance of two bank robbers who take him hostage, Ichiro is whisked off to an abandoned building. Wanting to be a coward no longer, Ichiro remembers the words and experiences he encountered on Monster Island, so he captures the criminals, winning the respect of his parents and that of the older children as well.

Though utilizing sequences from a number of prior films, REVENGE introduces an original beast in the only newly-filmed monster footage. Gaborah, or Gabra, an "electrical" monster, so-called because of the discharge it gives to anything which touches it, offers little new. Physically he seems far removed from the ferocity of his predecessors, more an adjunct to the children's book world of the ogre. Gaborah's weapon

necessitates the roto-scoping of electrical patterns onto the film stock by cartoon animators. Apart from this and the shrinking of Minya, the effects department has little else to do because of the abundance of stock footage from DESTROY ALL MONSTERS, SON OF GODZILLA and EBIRAH. Tsuburaya's ill health may have forced Toho's hand, but the decision undoubtedly kept production costs down on a film whose market limitations are inherent in its focus on the very young.

The story of the film's play in America is a case in point as to the gamble Toho undertook. GODZILLA'S REVENGE was originally titled MINYA, SON OF GODZILLA, promotional copy forewarning of the tone to which the film would adhere. "Every boy needs a friend, even if it's a monster." An east coast release failed to deliver the necessary dollar response, so Mazon Films, the U.S. distributor, recalled the picture and set about designing a new approach. To play down the kiddie aspect the distributor retitled the film GODZILLA'S REVENGE with advertising sporting an assortment of giant beasts to attract the audience previous Toho monster films drew Word of mouth spread, and the motion picture was withdrawn, sold to television, and released occasionally to theatres for "kiddie matinees."

The problem with the film is its simplistic view of the world. It shows Ichiro resolving his dilemma quite easily through a cinematically dramatic approach of treating the problem with a cure that is an adult's sanction of the resolution, a very sure method of getting one's self killed if one is to believe violence is an answer. Intercutting of scenes showing Minya waging his own battle against his attackers as Ichiro battles with the crooks, while visually creative for a Toho genre film, increases tension to enforce the violent impact. While the young viewer may revel in the spectacle, and hopefully not adopt violence as a means of solving problems, filmmakers in general will find REVENGE hard to swallow, requiring plenty of sugar to be spoon-fed the lesson it so nervously teaches.

Toho next turned to horror-melodrama for the period-film PORTRAIT FROM HELL. With export sales of its fantasy and sf films on the decline, Toho sought out other avenues to reach the escapist, if not internationally, then domestically. Shiro Toyoda (ILLUSION OF BLOOD, THE LEGEND OF THE WHITE SERPENT) directed this tale of a long ago time when the Japanese appeared culturally inferior to Korea and China.

A Korean artist, proud of his heritage to the point of stubbornness, is disliked by a Japanese lord equally as stubborn, boasting of his political and physical control to subordinates. Respecting the artist's talent in spite of a dislike for the man, the lord grants the painter special privileges, but he becomes infatuated with the man's young daughter and forcibly takes her as his mistress. The artist is advised to paint pictures of paradise if he desires her return. He tries, but fails; he can only paint what he sees: the misery, horror and suffering of the people. A bargain is struck between the two men in which the artist will paint a picture of Hell; if the despot is pleased he will allow the artist's daughter to be set free. The Korean asks the lord to put a lord to a carriage, suggesting that the ruler be in the vehicle when it is set ablaze. He agrees, but substitutes the painter's daughter who is chained to the carriage seat. Though the lord demands an apology for the artist's insults before he will release the girl, the artist believes that the lord's desire is so great for the girl that he would not let her perish, so he refuses. Watching in horror as his daughter is consumed in flames, the painter realizes that Hell is here on Earth. Upon completion of his picture, the despondent artist hangs himself. The lord views the painting which details a carriage in



Facing page: Gaborah, the "electrical" monster, facing off against the immortal lizard in GODZILLA'S REVENGE. This page: Joseph Cotton, Akira Takarada and Richard Jefferie, top, and assorted men in suits from LATITUDE ZERO. Confrontation of Tatsuya Nakadai, bottom left, and Kinoshita Nakamura to decide the fate of Yoko Naito, in carriage, in PORTRAIT OF HELL.

flames and himself within it. Damned to an eternity in Hell for his evil deeds, the man goes mad, and in his own demented mind is consumed.

LATITUDE ZERO, the final entry for the series, combines monster and science-fiction elements with pricy under, rather than on, the seas seas, cat and mouse games with futuristic technological innovation deciding approach. The title refers to a geographical designation, a secret city lying in the depths of the Pacific. There live a group of scientists recruited from all over the world for development and preservation of man's scientific and cultural knowledge, to protect it from the evil which seeks to command the Earth. Three men confront this unknown world when, facing death in a bathysphere due to the eruption of an undersea volcano, they are rescued by the super-sub **Alpha** and its commander. The men are given a crash course on the amazing city and its inhabitants when they behold the utopia's scientific breakthroughs. The evil counterpart to the people of **Latitude Zero** exist on Blood Rock, the volcanic island headquarters of its ruler who has kidnapped the discoverer of a new serum to fight the ravages of exposure to atomic radiation. The commander of the **Alpha** battles against bat-like humans, monster rats and a giant griffin before he and a raiding party are able to free the scientist. The restoration of peace finds two of the rescuers deciding to live out their lives in **Latitude Zero** while the third member of the bathysphere team hastens back to the surface world to write of this unbelievable city. But who will believe him?

Who could believe a Japanese film company's recruitment of so many non-working American actors to populate their film: Joseph Cotton, Caesar Romero, Richard Jaeckel, Linda Haynes, and famous "B" actress of fifties film, Patricia Medina? A North American campaign was obviously in mind when cast selection was considered to do Toho's films, at least partially, of their foreign stigma and associated dubbing problem. In effect, the trick works. Dialogue, how-

ever, is still a fault with these films, but in **LATITUDE ZERO** the brusqueness of the speech complements the serial-like plotting of the picture, the film's naivete is embellished by the dialogue of the comic book story.

Befitting the narrative and campish quality of the film's design are several awful men-in-suit creations which fortunately are not the main focus of the film. There are oversized bats and rats which plague the heroes in incredible clumsiness. So too goes the fate of a griffin which could have proven to have been an awesome adversary. The chemical beast is synthesized a spastically-operated marionette condor and a man-in-suit lion which appears more like a giant plush toy. This most gruesome sequence of an otherwise "G" rated adventure graphically displays the villain ripping the wings from the bird and grafting them onto the back of the anesthetized lion who is then super-charged into a giant, tying canmore that would be at home in a parade. In spite of this silliness, the remaining effects work as the film's catalyzing agent. This is no more apparent than in the explosive conclusion and in the operation and construction of the film's miniatures. Chief among the latter is the **Alpha**, the sleek submersible of Zero which was modified for Toho's **THE WAR IN SPACE** (1978).

Like **GODZILLA'S REVENGE** before it, **LATITUDE ZERO** dabbles in story and plotting generally avoided by the Japanese monster film, having done so only after years of an assembly-line attitude. The attitude resurfaces in the first half of the seventies when Toho produced a string of "monster versus monster" motion pictures in search of another **GODZILLA**.

Japan's cinema of the fantastic, considered by many an aberration, never saw dissolution from the curse. If anything, it appeared to thrive via an increasingly sympathetic fan audience, and in America, as elsewhere, the cult following

was bemused by the analogies made between the Japanese fantasy film and the filmmaking of others. The **Godzilla** character, too, had become institutionalized in his excursions into the realm of the absurd. To the elder followers, faithful since the beginning and eluding attention, this absurdity impinged on the serious nature which elevated the primitives of the fifties. Decline was apparent, but to the young people whose first association with the Japanese fantasy cinema arrived in the mid-to-late sixties, that dismay was confusing rhetoric: **Godzilla**, after all, was of a supermeric breed, an ally of the "good" monsters, and, by coincidence, of the humans who sporadically populated the pictures. Most perplexing were the distribution problems which inconceivably worsened in the latter sixties. Several titles were sold directly to American television; some were released here in limited engagements or many years after their original Japanese premiere, or both; some never saw the brilliance of an arc lamp or projection bulb in the U.S. at all. So it was to the seventies that the devoted turned, each for his or her own reason: a renaissance, improved availability, increased production, or simply another fantasy motion picture from Japan.

Two fantasy titles produced in 1964 were unacknowledged in our earlier installment. The first stars Frankie Sakai in a fantasy-horror-ghost-comedy, a genre in which the chubby actor appears to have had some success in Japan. The film, **KIGEKI EKIMAE KAIKAN**, is saddled with an incredibly lengthy translation: **THE GHOST STORY OF FUNNY ACT IN FRONT OF TRAIN STATION**. The second picture, also lacking in details, is **WHIRLWIND (DAI TATSUWAKI)**, director Hiroshi Inagaki's (**THE THREE TREASURES**, **THE YOUTH AND HIS AMULET**) fantasy starring Toshiro Mifune in a tale of a sorceress and her wizard husband ■

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JFFJ #12

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Right: Production photo of the green gargantuan "devil-fish" battle with Toho's **WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS** (1966). The nebulus was a marionette operated from above the set (note support wires). The duel had to be choreographed to avoid fouling the lines. Though stills exist of a "devilfish" Frankenstein conflict from **FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD** (1965), if any footage was shot it ended on the cutting room floor.





TATSUNOKO PRODUCTIONS

TELEVISION ANIMATION

Television animation in Japan was born with TETSUWAN ATOM (ASTRO BOY), which premiered on January 1, 1963. Its success prompted the creation of a number of new studios to produce TV animation. One of the first and most successful of these has been Tatsunoko (Seehorse) Production Company, Ltd.

Tatsunoko was the brainchild of Tatsuo Yoshida, one of three creative brothers. The three had already formed a studio to begin producing live-action TV programming when the success of TETSUWAN ATOM persuaded Tatsuo to concentrate on the new field of animation. Brother Kenji was primarily a writer, brother Toyoharu (who goes by the pen name of Ippei Kuri) was primarily an artist, Tatsuo Yoshida was both.

Tatsunoko's first program premiered on May 1, 1965; their second on April 2, 1967. These were UCHU ACE (SPACE ACE) and MACH GO! GO! GO! (SPEED RACER), both personally designed by Tatsuo Yoshida. Both were hits of their seasons. Tatsunoko's production gradually increased, and although the other two brothers played important roles in the studio's operation, Tatsuo maintained such close personal supervision over every aspect of the business that it was popularly known as "Tatsuo's company".

The studio was seriously shaken when Tatsuo Yoshida unexpectedly died in 1977 at the early age of 45. However, the other Yoshida brothers quickly had it running smoothly again. Today, Kenji Yoshida is Tatsunoko's president, and Ippei Kuri is the head artistic planner. He personally creates most of the character and costume designs, and paints many of the more elaborate publicity posters. Tatsunoko is currently turning out four or more half-hour TV series at any one time, plus an occasional 90-minute TV animated feature. The studio has only had one theatrical release to date: GATCHAMAN (1978), a condensation of some of the most dramatic adventures from the 1972-74 series of the same title.

The Japanese interest in costumed heroes saw Tatsunoko gearing a number of their shows to that genre. Following are plot summaries for several of these programs.

Destiny Squad

—In Production—

Philosophers say that human destiny, like the Moebius strip, has no beginning and no end. Anything mankind may do, it has done in the forgotten past and will do again in the distant future. Does this mean that mankind is fated to run its same course over and over? Tatsunoko plans to provide an answer in a new, animated teleseries which the producers are designing for audiences of high school age and older.

As a background to the show, Tatsunoko has set up a premise in which a planet, Madomazia, formerly existed between Mars



Gopawa 5 Godamn

Five young friends go exploring on an uninhabited island and there discover a deserted, hidden computer complex. Records reveal that the complex was built by a once-famous scientist, working alone after the world ridiculed his prediction of the emergence of a subterranean demonic civilization. The scientist constructed his system as a defense for humanity, but the man died before the invasion became a reality. The five youths pledge to become the forewarned scientist's successors to carry out his mission, bravely venturing into action in the super-robot Goleth against the aggressors (36 thirty-minute episodes; April 4-Dec. 26, 1976)

Casshan

Dr. West, an authority on electric technology, is engaged in developing robots to serve mankind. One night the robots are struck by lightning, setting them off on a path of destruction. To cope with this devastating turn of events, Ted, Dr. West's son, voluntarily becomes a human robot, named Casshan, realizing he can never return to his natural form. (35 thirty-minute episodes; Oct. 2, 1973-June 25, 1974)

Gordian the Warrior

It is some time in the future, and Daigo, a reckless teen, speeds across the wilderness on his super-cycle. Accompanied by his robot pet, a black panther, Daigo arrives at Victor Town, built as a model to showcase the ideal city. Constructed on barren landscape, the city is under attack by an army of fanatics equipped with sophisticated weapons. Daigo and his panther friend are drafted into a defense army, but despite their strenuous resistance, the defenders are soon verging on defeat. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a giant robot, Gordian, appears and drives off the invulnerable force. (75 thirty-minute episodes; Oct. 7, 1973-Feb. 22, 1981)

Top, left to right: Gordian; Casshan; Hurricane Polimer. Middle, left to right: Muking; Gopawa 5 Godamn; Tekkaman.

and Jupiter, an area now occupied by an asteroid belt. 30,000 years ago, the planet's two superpowers, constantly at odds with each other, domesticated a populace living in a world of pollution, overpopulation, and resource depletion. When a nuclear war sunders the once peaceful, prosperous orb, two small groups flee the ravaging. A military clique heads for a planet in the double star system of 61 Cygni; humanitarians and scientists make Earth their home, but the environment proves inhospitable. To keep their racial and cultural heritage alive, the Madomazians implant their genetic traits in the Cro-Magnon cave dwellers they encounter.

By the second millennia A.D., Earth mirrors the circumstances prior to the demise of Madomazia.

PRODUCTIONS

by Fred Patten

N FROM THE SEAHORSE



Muteking, The Dashing Warrior

12-year-old Linn supported his father when the world laughed at the scientist for predicting the arrival of an invasions force from space, but Linn didn't expect to become personally involved, that is until he meets Takoro, the strange, young "deputy sheriff" from another world who is on the trail of the notorious space criminals, the four Kurodako Brothers. They plot the instrumentation of their alien science and natural shape changing powers to become the secret masters of Earth. With the assistance of Takoro, Linn takes on another identity as the mighty superhero, Muteking, to frustrate the schemes of the Brothers "Four." (52 thirty-minute episodes; Sept. 7, 1980/7)

Hurricane Polimar

Though Takeshi's father wishes him to become a top-notch criminal investigator, the youth's attitude toward crime-fighting is so incompatible with his that he disowns the boy. In spite of the training which has not only turned Takeshi into an all-around athlete but a martial arts expert as well, he investigates crime as a lone wolf, eventually becoming a private detective's assistant and finally a general handyman. Secretly, Takeshi has obtained from a scientist a new artificial polymer, Polimet, that is far stronger than steel. Polimet enables Takeshi to transform into Hurricane Polimar, an invincible costumed hero. (26 thirty-minute episodes; Oct. 4, 1974-March 28, 1975)

Tekkaman, The Space Knight

A young boy evolves into a mighty warrior named Tekkaman through the marvels of modern science when it is discovered that aliens from outer space have come to invade Earth. Armed with a space lance, the superhero gallantly undertakes the threat of the grotesque otherworldly creatures. During his numerous battles Tekkaman meets a mysterious young man from another planet who offers aid whenever he is in danger. (26 thirty-minute episodes; July 2-December 24, 1978)■



A military general offers to settle another planet to ease the pressure on Earth; his motive, a selfish one, will enable him to survive and become dictator of the remnants of the human race.

A woman, aware of the Madomazian impact on the human species because of her mental powers, foresees the unfriendly return of the military contingent from 61 Cygni. To protect mankind, she forms the Destiny Squad, consisting of three youths who have had intensive physical and mental training to prepare them for the day the ancient astronauts arrive.

DESTINY SQUAD is the story of these three brave souls—Kuni Yamashiro, David Andrews, and Maya Tekel—of how they confront mankind's destiny and how it affects them.■



ORIENT EXPRESS

Its conception and primary *raison d'être* could not have been more discouraging. MIGHTY PEKING MAN owes its very coming to be to some enterprising executives at Shaw Brothers who must have quickly sensed the box-office prospects of cashing in on the lucrative De Laurentiis/Guillermo much-publicized bastardization of KING KONG. Thus, a moderately large budget in hand, Shaw Bros. assembled a strange mixed bag of talents in their Hong Kong studios: some feculent but dependable director and actors, a Japanese special effects crew and a sultry European blonde for added spice. An imitation script was filmed and the finished product was given a glossy treatment, recut and dubbed as to make it more palatable and suitable for Western standards of sickness. Lurid ad material anticipated alluring situations as a gargantuan ape-like creature stomped over the ruins of Hong Kong trying to reach a blonde scantily clad in what looked like leftovers from Raquel Welch's wardrobe in ONE MILLION YEARS B.C. Could this be "King Kong Meets Sheena, Queen of the Jungle?" Unpossessing as all this indicated, one would never dream of a sleeper lurking beneath this facade of schlock.

Yet against all odds, what could easily be taken for a second-generation rip-off—and thus two shades removed from its great model—proved to be a clever variation, not a mere remake of, but a complex reworking on the original KONG. Of course it is derivative, and for fuller appreciation it depends on a previous familiarity with the RKO classic. Even so, its many virtues suffice to grant it an outstanding place in the development of popular films as a triumph of fecundity of myth over producers' voracity.

The story unfolds along the general pattern set by THE LOST WORLD, and comprises three parts—here referred to as Jungle I, Jungle II and Civilization according to environment and circumstances—each of them well defined and stylistically (both as narrative and language) clear-cut. In fact, the transition between two consecutive parts is done quite abruptly, with no smooth edges. Plot progression, pace, atmosphere, color tones and soundtrack—everything changes all of a sudden. Indeed, while this may represent a major structural flaw, on the other side it allows the screenplay author (with the complicity of an audience supposedly acquainted with popular genres) to elaborate freely on conventions and idioms peculiar to each part, and this process of overdetailing is done to the point of his delivering three almost self-contained, semi-independent episodes.

Jungle I opens with greedy entrepreneur Lu Tien organizing an expedition to the Indian wilderness to capture the legendary Peking Man. The pre-credits sequence is an illusion clearly molded upon Kong's enraged attack on the Skull Island native village. A huge black anthropoid rises from the bowels of the Earth in a ferocious manner—a "resurrection" scene parallel to the stone god's emergence in MAJIN. This first image of a powerful, vengeful divinity (as he comes up from among the ruins of an ancient shrine) represents Lu's conception of the Untamed Beast he would properly subdue for fun and pro-

THE MIGHTY PEKING MAN

Shaw Brothers Hong Kong
meets Sheena, Queen of the Jungle



by Horacio Higuchi

ORIENT EXPRESS

fit—and does not correspond to the personality “actually” given to the creature next time he is shown, in Jungle II. This idea is deliberately shared among the audience at this point as to instill fear for the monster and sympathy for the bravery of the human characters, an approach to be radically reversed in the following parts. Hero Chen Cheng-Feng (dubbed “Johnny Feng” in the English-spoken version) is brought in as a frustrated man eager to escape from reality after a sentimental breakdown. It is he who naturally makes room for and justifies Jungle II. The tone set for Jungle I is comparable to the hunting party sequences in KONG: Civilized men face the hazards of a wild milieu and succumb to it in a descent into hell. Only this time the perils are not represented by a fantastic, time-warped Jurassic/Cretaceous fauna, but instead by a more “realistic,” down-to-earth Nature: savage tigers, an elephant stampede, acrophobic high cliffs, a quicksand pool, snakes and spiders—in fact, every jungle movie cliché catalogued and jumbled together to an exhilarating pace for maximum effect. Cruelty of wilderness (a tiger devours a boy’s leg) is matched by cruelty of man (Lu shoots the boy in cold blood instead of helping him), making Jungle I a suffocating, nightmarish world.

Hell unexpectedly becomes Heaven as Jungle II starts with the introduction of Beauty, an exquisite, curvaceous blonde wearing a modicum of a fur wardrobe. She barely understands white man’s tongue, communicates and rules over the animals, and calls herself Ah Wei (“Samantha” in the dubbed version). By then the only remaining expedition member is Chen—Lu having deserted and returned to civilization—and his wounds are treated by the girl, the survivor of a plane crash some 20 years back who has grown up in the wild, raised by Utah, the Peking Man. From this point on the monster anthropoid turns from Untamed Beast into Noble Savage, a benign if all-powerful creature, playing both father and (implicitly) first lover to Ah Wei. The intervention of eroticism is inevitable: Chen saves Ah Wei from a cobra bite (a phallic symbol) and soon teaches her the wonders of sex.

Owing to the fact these pictures are primarily aimed for children, eroticism has long been lacking from Japanese monster movies—until, perhaps, the surprising bionic heroine of *TERMINATOR OF MECHAGODZILLA* who reveals her artificial breasts complete with (functional?) nipples. The absence of sexuality was most conspicuous in the two Toho Kong films, considering its importance in the original KONG, here, though, it is expressed in capital letters. There is an extraordinary scene reworked after the famous skyscraper bedroom episode in KONG: Utah peers through the mouth of the cave in which Ah Wei and Chen are making love—and then he expresses his jealousy and frustration by kicking away huge trees. The girl realizes the giant’s grief and comes out to soothe him, fondling and kissing his enormous fingers. Utah responds by actually caressing Ah Wei’s body. One could conjecture that, having spent many years together, this scene of mutual *chenah* must have happened before (Ann Darrow never had such a chance!—in spite of Ah Wei’s virginal, naive behavior towards Chen and other people. This sticky situation is delivered with commendable naturalism, unlike Dino-Kong’s rambling, ter-



fetched attempts at eliciting the audience’s sympathy for his love by playing a fool. The rest of Jungle II shows a peaceful ménage-à-trois affair involving Ah Wei, Utah and Chen in an edenic surrounding: The mean beasts of Jungle I are replaced by friendly counterparts and everybody seems happy. Just when the tone turns schmaltzy enough to dangerously plunge into the BLUE LAGOON category, Chen is suddenly haunted by a Robert Conway sort of motivation and decides to leave Shangri-La, taking Ah Wei and Utah to Civilization.

The final part is quite similar to Kong’s exploits in New York. Utah is chained, publicly exposed and humiliated, and escapes for the sake of the girl he loves. But this time the feeling is mutual. Ah Wei also flees, disappointed with Chen’s renewed interest towards his former girlfriend and, after being nearly raped by Lu, equally eager to meet Utah and get back to the jungle. Their convergence finally happens on the top of a building, but when the entire conflict seems about to be satisfactorily settled for everyone concerned—including the audience—the WASP English commander of the local defense force breaks his promise of sustaining fire and orders a massive attack on the Beast. Forces of law and order are shown as reduced to mindless, repressive pawns of authority (“You can’t save the monster!”), shouts a soldier to Chen as the latter tries to rescue both Ah Wei and Utah). Love is doomed but is the only way of liberation, as the girl deliberately chooses to die with the Peking Man rather than skip to safety with Chen: a sort of traditional double-suicide *shinju* pact.

It is stimulating to see what can be done with an intriguing, clever script, and a good cast and crew even when serving to less than noble purposes of blatant nipping-off. Besides being undeniably entertaining and competently crafted, *MIGHTY PEKING MAN* offers strong characterizations for instance, every major individual has background and logic motivations, as it seldom happens in monster movies, both the creature and the heroine are given equal time of screen exposition and importance in plot development and revitalization of old themes and clichés. Racial overtones alone could originate a whole arde of discussions. Indeed, the underlying texture is quite rich yet never over-pretentious. Technically it is also of high calibre. Extensive location work in India is utilized with elegance and good timing, and some scenes such as the cliff-climbing operation seem genuinely dangerous. The Peking Man’s conception—more like a primitive man than an ape, with bipedal gait, erect torso and flexible facial expressions—is far more successful than any primate contraption made at Toho’s. As for the special effects, they are variable in quality. Some poor small models (a plane and ship) and shoddy background projections are compensated by magnificent miniature buildings and explosions. A brisk editing job conceals most of the weaker links. The operating giant hand is a masterpiece, much more natural-looking in shape and movement than the Dino-Kong’s—no, no awkwardly crushed little finger this time.

A new version of Kong could hardly fare better in terms of myth renewal (“What if Ann had loved Kong?”), once asked a French critic in *Cahiers du Cinéma* without being too intellectual for general consumption. In fact, this film is an eloquent proof of the vitality of popular, exploitation cinema.

And it is genuinely sad, as Utah’s burning corpse falls over his killers, Chen carries off Ah Wei’s body and beholds Hong Kong Bay in flames, surrounded by the wreckage of a purged city. His grave fault, for which Ah Wei begs Utah for forgiveness in her agony, was to bring them to the ruthless savagery of Civilization. This time the planes (helicopters) did it—for Beauty and Beast, two deviants from the norm, they both died for our sins.

(Article continued on following page)

ORIENT EXPRESS

Note: Director Ho Meng-Hua is a kind of a jack-of-all-trades, specializing in gimmick, period actioners (THE FLYING GUILLOTINE, THE DRAGON MISSILE), a sort of an Oriental counterpart to spaghetti-western auteur Gianfranco Parolini (a.k.a. Frank Kramer), otherwise, he has done some fantasy/horror films like OILY MANIAC and both parts of BLACK MAGIC. Scenario author I Kuang is extremely prolific and apparently writes more than a dozen scripts a year, notably for Chang Chen's Shaolin kung fu series and Chu Yuan's elaborate clan intrigues. Japanese special effects director Sadamasa Arakawa picked up where Tsuburaya left off (SON OF GODZILLA, DESTROY ALL MONSTERS, YOGI) and subsequently departed Toho as Teruyoshi Nakano came to stay. Lead Li Hsiu-Hsien had a good part in THE SAVAGE FIVE, Chang Chen's impressive dialectal reinterpretation of THE SEVEN SAMURAI and portrayed Bruce Lee in the pseudo-biopic BRUCE LEE

AND I, among his fantasy films he had the title role in both THE OILY MANIAC and INFRA-MAN. Ku Feng has played countless villains and/or wise teachers in practically every Shaw kung fu period actioner—he had a striking characterization in Chu Yuan's KILLER CLANS. Hsiao Yao and Chen Ping also have a considerable record as non-combatant heroes in such flicks. Evelyn Kraft was LADY DRACULA in the German picture of the same name. ■

HSING HSING WANG (THE MIGHTY PEKING MAN) A Shaw Brothers Production, August 10, 1977. In Parovision and Eastmancolor. Directed by Ho Meng-Hua. Produced by Vee Keng Shaw and Chua Lam. Screenplay by I Kuang. Directors of photography: Tsao Hui-Chi and Wu Cho-Hua. Lighting by Chen Feng. Art direction by Johnson Tsao Hui-Ching and Chen Ching-Shen. Special effects directed by Sadamasa Arakawa. Make-up by Wu Hsiu-Ching and Chou Wei-Yin. Wardrobe

by Liu Chi-Yu. Hairdressing by Feng Yen-Lien. Edited by Chiang Hsing-Lung, Thom Noble and Papiia Noble. Sound by Wang Young-Hua. Dialogue recording by Mao Wei. Sound effects by Li Yi-Chin and Hsu Ping-Kong. Music by Chen Yung-Yu and De Wolfe. Executive producer Rummie Shaw. Production manager Chua Lam. Unit manager Peng Cheng. Assistant directors Hung Ka, Wu Shun, Tang Yu-Wei and Yen Tao-Hua. Property master Li Yu and Liu Ping-Wa. Continuity by Chen Yung-Li and Su Ho. Stunts arranged by Yuan Hsing-Jen. Cast: Evelyn Kraft (Ah Wei Samantha), Li Hsiu-Hsien (Chen Cheng-Feng/Johnny Feng), Ku Feng (Lu Tien), Hsiao Yao (Huang Tsai-Hua), Hsu Shao-Chang (Ah Lung), Lin Wei-Tu (Chen Shi-Yu/Charlie Feng), Chen Ping (Lucy), Wu Hsing-Sheng (Ah P), Ted Thomas, Steve Nicholson. 91 minutes. Released in the U.S. in 1980 by World North Corp. as GOLIATHON



Films from Hong Kong

From the land of the martial arts film phenomenon, the studios continue to let escape a number of fantasy-geared motion pictures, though their makeup is still predominately based in the Chinese idiom. DREADNAUGHT, TOWER OF DEATH and PHANTOM KILLER were screened in 1980, all martial arts-horror entries. Director Hark Tsui's DON'T PLAY WITH FIRE, also premiering in 1980 and an entry in the 11th Paris International Festival of Fantasy and Science Fiction, had little to do with the genre, but it was filled with blazing bullets, pyrotechnics and violent suspense. In 1981 Shaw Brothers produced THE BLOODTHIRSTY DEAD, HEX AND WITCH-CRAFT, CORPSE MANIA, REVENGE OF

THE CORPSE, BLACK MAGIC PART II (aka THE GHOST STORY) and PHANTOM KILLER. First Film Organization, Ltd. issued PICTURE THE DEVIL ("A thrilling story based on the occult of the East."); and Century Motion Picture & Distribution Co., Ltd. released THE IMP ("A long-forgotten nightshade of the past returns to claim its seed."). For Golden Harvest release, Bo Ho Films produced ENCOUNTERS OF THE SPOOKY KIND, a martial arts-comedy-horror picture starring a fat kung fu hero, played by Sammo Hung, who also directed. The picture is unusual in that hero Hung loses his battles most of the time and because of the movie's unique combination of martial arts cross-bred with humor and the horror genre. Early publicity indicated that Shaw Bros. 1981 film BLOODY PARROT had fantasy elements, the flesh-eating monster women, but such elements were taken by the villains in the film. PARROT is a

gory Chinese sword film with scenes of violent deaths and dissected bodies.

Fortissimo during the remainder of '82 and '83 are a great number of fantasy pictures. HE LIVES BY NIGHT, from Cinema City, will follow a homicidal maniac who murders his victims at night until he tangles with a female disc jockey. Golden Harvest's ORIENTAL VODOODO, a period action thriller involving the occult aspects of Taoism and MEN'S INHUMANITY TO MEN, a Ching Dynasty horror-comedy with ghosts, etc. fighting humans, are also on the horizon. Shaw has several works in progress: THE DUEL IN HEAVEN, in which two rivals from heaven continue their conflict on Earth in human form, one becoming a solar-charged superman, the horror thriller REINCARNATION, about life after death. ■

FUNNIES

THE UNTOLD CAREER STORY OF

HIDEO TSUBURAYA

Eiji's half-brother

© 1982 World Games

IT WAS 1955. THE SUCCESS OF GODZILLA GARNERED EIJI TSUBURAYA HIS FIRST "JAPANESE MOVIE TECHNIQUE AWARD." HIDEO, AN ELEVATOR OPERATOR SINCE BEFORE THE WAR, SAW HIS CHANCE.

C'MON, EIJI—YOU'RE A BIG SHOT NOW! GET ME A JOB AT TOHO!

WELL... I DON'T KNOW!

PLEASE! PLEASE!

AN OLD SOFTIE, EIJI BUCKLED DOWN. HE PROPOSED TO HIS NEXT PICTURE'S DIRECTOR, INOSHIRO HONDA, THAT HIDEO PLAY THE TITLE ROLE OF ROPAN.

WOW! LOOKS LIKE FUN!

ONLY IF YOU'RE SURE HE DOESN'T SCREW UP. IT TOOK MANY WEEKS TO CONSTRUCT THOSE MINIATURES!

THIS COSTUME'S NO GOOD, EIJI. I CAN'T FLY IN THIS!

NO—WAIT! STOP!

FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP

CRASH!

BANNED FROM THE SET, HIDEO FOUND A JOB (WITH EIJI'S HELP) AS A COSTUME DESIGNER IN THRONE OF BLOOD.

THIS IS A SAMURAI OUTFIT? WHY, I'LL—I'LL...

TOSHIRO! YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE!

TIME HAD PASSED. MR. HONDA PERMITTED HIDEO BACK ON HIS SET, ONLY IF HE WORKED BEHIND THE SCENES. EIJI TRIED HIM OUT AS AN ASSISTANT CAMERAMAN.

REMEMBER—240 FRAMES PER SECOND...WE WANT SLOW MOTION!

RIGHT, EIJI!

INOSHIRO FAINTED! W-WHAT WENT WRONG?

ALL I KNOW IS I SAVED EIJI, SINCE HE GAVE ME A WRONG ORDER! WE WANTED SLOW MOTION, SO I SLOWED DOWN THE CAMERA!

FOR A SHORT WHILE, HIDEO WORKED AS A SOUND RECORDIST, FAR FROM THE SET. HE CREATED UNIQUE SOUND EFFECTS FOR THE VOICES OF MONSTERS.

Twee!

LATER, EIJI HAD HIDEO WORK FOR HIM AS AN "IDEA CONSULTANT."

EIJI, LOOK! GODZILLA VS. PUPPYRAH!

FILE IT.

THE YEARS PASSED. HIDEO COULDN'T GET ONE IDEA ACCEPTED.

FILE IT.

FINALLY, IN 1967, THE PROUD HIDEO COULD STAND IT NO MORE.

ER...INTERESTING DESIGN, BUT I'M AFRAID...

ENOUGH!

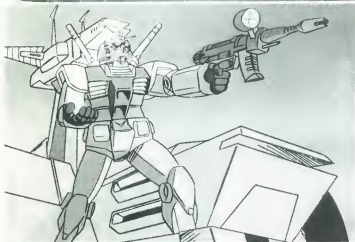
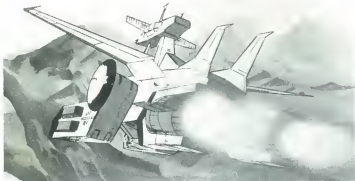
I AM A TSUBURAYA! EITHER YOU ACCEPT, OR I COMMIT HARA-KIRI!

I'M THINKING! I'M THINKING!

ALTHOUGH TEMPTED, EIJI KNEW HE HAD NO CHOICE. THIS WAS BORN HIDEO'S GREATEST TRIUMPH... MINYA, SON OF GODZILLA!

COO! COO!

Mobile Suit Gundam



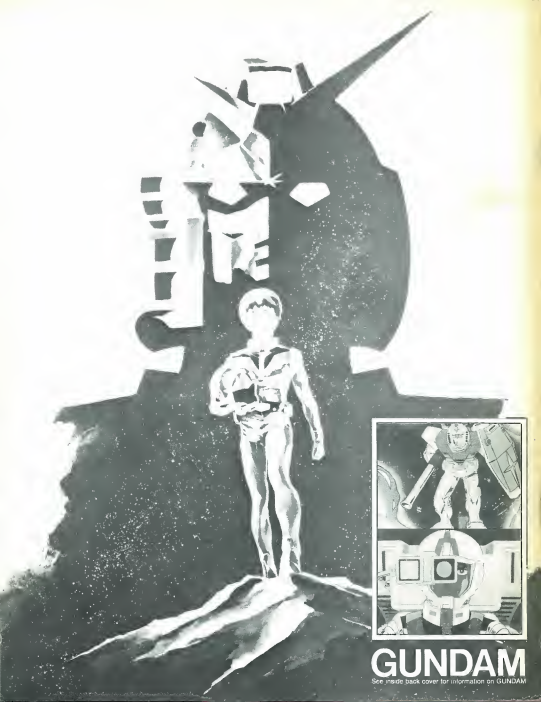
The popular animated television series from Nippon Sunrise has been transformed into two features: GUNDAM I, a compilation of the first thirteen episodes, was released March 18, 1981. GUNDAM II, culled from episodes 14-30, premiered July 11, 1981. New sequences were created to smooth the rough edges resulting from condensation. Both films are being distributed in Japan by Shochiku Co., Ltd. Export sales are being handled by Hiro Media Associates. GUNDAM II is scheduled for release in the spring of 1982.

In a future in which a population of ten million people live in stations orbiting Earth, one of the satellites, Gun, rebels against Earth and the other space colonies. Gundam, the multi-talented giant robot, must rise to meet the challenge of the insurgents.

The human drama of MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM remains the most important aspect of this adult series, showing how various members of the "cast" react to crises, the meaning of life is constantly questioned, and occasionally answered.

Scenes on this page are taken from the second Gundam picture, on the back cover, GUNDAM I ■





GUNDAM

See inside back cover for information on GUNDAM



Japanese Fantasy Film Journal # 14 (1982)

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